

Romans 9:6-13

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[0 : 00] Today, we're going to begin what I believe, I think, God intends to be three more weeks in chapter 9. In seeing that the large rejection of the gospel by the nation of Israel does not discredit the gospel.

And that's why Paul is beginning to have this conversation. The fact that the people who should have gotten it more than any other people by human terms should have understood who the Christ was.

The fact that they rejected him does not discredit the gospel. And in fact, the unbelief of Israel is consistent with God's promises, with God's person, with God's prophecies, and with God's provision.

You guys proud of me? I'm alliterating now. We're going to look at those four Ps. And today, we're going to look at verses 6 through 13 and see that the unbelief of Israel is consistent with God's promises.

But before we do that, let's read together all of chapter 9. Paul writes, To them belong the patriarchs.

[1 : 32] And from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

And not all children of Abraham, because they are his offspring. But through Isaac shall your offspring be named. This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise who are counted as offspring.

For this is what the promise said. About this time next year, I will return. And Sarah shall have a son. And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had not done anything either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of him who calls, she was told, The older will serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means.

For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. Something that depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.

[2 : 45] For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will? But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to the molder, Why have you made me like this?

Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles.

As indeed he says in Hosea, Those who were not my people, I will call my people. And who was not my beloved, I will call beloved. And in the very place where it was said to them, You were not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved. For the Lord will carry out this sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.

[4 : 04] And as Isaiah predicted, If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah. What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it?

That is, a righteousness that is by faith? But that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching the law? Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith. But as if it were based on works, they have stumbled over the stumbling stone. As it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. Join me in prayer. Father God, certainly you have been good to your people.

You have rescued us from the mire of sin. The place where we could not rescue ourselves. No effort on our part could have pulled us out of such a dark and terrible place.

[5 : 06] But you have plucked us from that place. You have brought us out of darkness into your marvelous light. This is a great work of yours. You have also given us the scriptures that we might be guided in our understanding of the gospel.

And I pray that this day as we soak in these eight verses that you will find us humble being spoken to from above as your words are inspired.

The words on these pages translated from the Greek are inspired and they're for us for this day.

And I pray that we will accept them as such. I pray, Father, you will not find us haughty intellectuals standing over the word of God as if we are gods judging you for what you have said.

And I pray that all of this is the praise and glory of Jesus Christ. It's in his name I pray. Amen. So we're going to hone in together on verses 6-13.

Let me say to you that what we're going to be studying over the next few weeks is heavy doctrine. But it is joyful to understand and to know.

[6 : 26] I would expect that you will wrestle with it. I have and I do. It's a continual process. But I would ask that you let the word of God speak to your life today.

So let's look together beginning in verse 6. Paul says it's not as though the word of God has failed. The things he referenced particularly in verse 4 the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises.

It's not that these things have failed to accomplish their goal. In fact, they will accomplish the exact goal they were set out to accomplish. Isaiah 55-11 reads, My word that goes out from my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.

It shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Many of you are probably familiar with that.

Proceeding that, there's another verse, verses, that you're probably very familiar with and we don't often put them together.

Verses 8 and 9 of Isaiah 55, God says, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

[7 : 47] So God says to us, You can't fully understand me because I am God and you are not. and my word which goes forth will accomplish the very thing that it was sent forth to accomplish.

So the word of God has not failed just because some of Israel doesn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is the Messiah, their Deliverer. It doesn't mean the word of God has failed.

The word of God is accomplishing what it was intended to accomplish. He goes on to say the last half, for not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

And He begins to frame for us as He's done in chapter 2, verses 28 and 29 of Romans, that it's those who belong to Israel by faith that are the true Israel.

Those that are the recipients of the promise by faith, not by the flesh. Romans 2, 28 and 29 says, For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical, but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.

[9 : 00] His praise is not from man, but from God. This has always been the way of God. Abraham was a man justified by faith.

He believed in the promises of God. He didn't understand the full realization of the promises of God. He didn't know how it was that all the nations of the world would be blessed in his line.

He didn't know how it was to happen, but he knew that it would, and he trusted that God would do what he said he would do, and that is why Abraham was justified.

Galatians 3, 7-9 reads, It is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham, and the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, In you shall all the nations be blessed.

So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Isn't that phenomenal? The commentary that Paul gives us on the promise given to Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, that the scripture foreseeing that God would justify Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham saying, In you the nations will be blessed.

[10:15] It's phenomenal. And he goes on to expound on that in verses 7 and 8 and 9 and 10 and 11 and 12 and 13. Verse 7 he says, And not all are children of Abraham because there is offspring, but through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

This means it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said about this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son.

Now if you recall the story of Sarah and Abraham long, long into their years beyond childbearing age both of them were, should not have been able to have a son.

And God comes and gives to Abraham a promise that he will bless the nations in his line. that his descendants shall be like the stars in heaven.

You remember this story? And Abraham believed him. He didn't have a clue how that might happen, but he believed him. And Sarah in her faithlessness didn't believe that it would be possible for her to bear a son.

[11:20] Gave to Abraham Hagar, their servant. You recall this and Abraham took Hagar and she had a son named Ishmael. Sarah became jealous of this relationship and sent Hagar and Ishmael away.

And it's there that we see Genesis 18.10 which is quoted in verse 9. About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son. The promise is re-given and then in Genesis 21.12 it says through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

And the point that he's making is that it's not Abraham's lineage, it's not just that they came from his flesh that makes them blessed, but it's the promise that God gave that makes them blessed.

Verse 8. This means it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. So you have Ishmael.

You know who the descendants of Ishmael are? The whole Arab nation. She doesn't exclude them from the gospel but that is the direction that that lineage took off in.

[12:26] In many ways God blessed Ishmael as an offspring of Abraham gave him lands helped him thrive but the promise was for Isaac.

Verse 10. And not only so but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man our forefather Isaac so Rebecca is Isaac's wife twins she had twins she conceived children though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad in order that God's purpose of election might continue not because of works but because of him who calls she was told the older will serve the younger as it is written Jacob I loved but Esau I hated.

So Rebecca's pregnant with twins and in this time there was great favor on the first born. So someone pregnant with twin boys although we'd say they're the same age in this case Esau was born first and Jacob was clinging to his heel remember the story when they were born the same time they came out together but Esau culturally was the favored one Esau was the one that should have gotten the blessing of his father Esau was the one that should have inherited his father's lands and then Jacob was just to serve the eldest brother the work here that Esau would have done his work that would have merited him all this favor was that he was born first which we know isn't actually a work of Esau but that would have been the thing credited to him to be the favored one but what does God say the older will serve the younger and then Jacob

I have loved but Esau I hated for either of them had done anything good or bad we'll talk about that verse in just a bit we'll frame it in its context so you can see that it is God who acts and not man I want you to hone in on a little phrase in verse 11 in order that God's purpose of election might continue not because of works but because of him who calls and it brings us to the doctrine of election we've been anticipating in chapter 9 it's not the first time it's been mentioned in the book of Romans upon a careful reading it's introduced in large part in Romans 8 verse 29 for those whom

he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the first foregone among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified there's a sure confidence in the act of God when God decides something will happen it happens God plans the ends and he works the means to see that come to reality and he's expounding here for us now what does that mean what is election and simply election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses a people for salvation not on account of any foreseen merit in them but only because of his sovereign good pleasure this is a biblical reality it will make your head spin I promise it will cause you to question many things we know to be true of God but it is taught in the scriptures now with it comes all kinds of controversy throughout the ages this has been a much debated doctrine and I'll say to you that by and large those who have held to the doctrine of election have won that debate you begin to study church history and you will see that the overarching understanding of this doctrine is that it's true and it's biblical it's very clearly taught but still much dissension has existed around this not because of the doctrine we don't ever blame the doctrine for that because men don't hold dear to the scriptures men want to apply their own understanding their own wisdom and their own logic to debate this issue there have been many labels that have been put on people who believe these things

[16:57] Calvinists Reform that's the famous one right now and I would say to you coming to a new place in my life that we should try at all costs to avoid those kinds of labels often it's the easy way to communicate what you may believe about a certain thing but you know that every label in this world comes with all kinds of baggage you have to know that not just around this topic but around every other topic in the world that there is somebody out there tossing a rock in the air ready to hurl it at the first person who says I am a because they have some idea I had to practice doing this by the way to get this right you can imagine a rock right they have some idea that they do not like about that person and when you take the label it all comes with it Chris and I got in a conversation with a man who had a bag of rocks a couple of months ago

I am glad he took them out one at a time and hurled them at us rather than beating us with a bag he was furious at anyone that might say they are reformed and I think that his emotion was justified he had had some experience with some young men that really frustrated him and at one point I had to say you are not mad at me put down the rocks let's have a conversation let's talk this out together these things come with so much the doctrine of election has not ever caused any Christian to live one way or necessarily another right the Calvinist that you may know that's been unloving that's tried to shrub these type of doctrines down your throat that has been haughty has been arrogant it's not the fault of the doctrine it's the fault of the lack of love and compassion in their life a couple of weeks ago we talked about the danger of preaching truth but doing so without love and so I'm saying all this because what I want you to do if you're sitting out there is put down your rocks I love Jesus Christ I love the gospel I dearly love people and I want to see God's kingdom go rampant throughout the earth I love the scriptures I think that they are sufficient and inerrant they're complete there's a part of me that wants to make my own little theological system and then do my very best to read it into the scripture that's called isogesis because I can kind of neaten up the package in my own mind what do I do when I do that I become my own God and what I'm really doing is worshipping myself and I'm taking the revelation of God and I'm patting myself on the back I don't want to do that I want to be humble

I want to say I am a created thing and you are the creator and if you have chosen to reveal a truth to me even though it may not fully make sense in my thinking and I humbly! submit to that and then I ask why?

why? why are you teaching me this? if this is a necessary thing for me to know why? did God just get carried away and begin writing? and he's like that was too much I wish I hadn't said that that's going to cause all kinds of issues people are going to be so totally confused about that if I could take it back but it's already been written the scrolls have been reproduced now the printing press is everywhere he didn't do it he knew!

[20:47] exactly what he was doing when he had the writers of the Bible write these words so let's be humble together let me give you a great example it's a really famous conversation between a man named Charles Simeon and John Wesley Charles Simeon in England was the leader I hope I'm getting this right of the evangelical movement of the Church of England so here's a man passionate about evangelism actually working to see the Church of England become evangelistic in

their practice and John Wesley who is the founder of Methodism also a phenomenal man John Wesley said to be the prince of Armenians those who would reject the doctrine of election although he really didn't but we'll get into that later Charles Simeon and John Wesley were being pressed!

to debate by lots and lots of us the unloving those who really want to see the big guys beat up on each other over issues like this and here's the conversation that they had as led by Charles Simeon Charles Simeon said Wesley A few questions.

Pray, sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would ever have thought of turning to God if God had not first put it into your heart? Wesley replied, yes, I do indeed.

Simeon said, and do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?

To which Wesley replied, yes, solely through Christ. But, sir, supposing you were at first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?

[22 : 51] Wesley said, no, I must be saved by Christ from first to last. Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?

Wesley simply said, no. What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God as much as an infant in its mother's arms? Wesley said, yes, altogether.

And is all your hope and the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom? Wesley says, yes, I have no hope but in him. To which Simeon concluded, then, sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again.

For this is all my Calvinism. This is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance. It is in substance all that I hold and as I hold it. And therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.

To which Wesley responded, to this I add nothing. And that was their great debate that everyone had pressed them to. To see that really, both of them were Bible-believing men.

[24 : 09] And they had been led astray in their framing of their argument. And Simeon brought it together in such a beautiful way. Do you believe?

Yes. Do you believe? Yes. How about this? Nope. And they all, and they realized, really? When it all came down to it, they were right there on the same page together. Now, these doctrines are important.

They should be talked about. They should be taught. But you have to recognize that most of the people that you encounter, those of us in this room that may not fully embrace the doctrine of election, we have so much more in common than those things that we have apart.

You know that? That we're a pretty conservative denomination being Southern Baptists. We're not debating things like the inerrancy of Scripture. That's a blessing to us.

It's good that we're debating things that we can debate with Scripture. That ultimately, we're all walking on a tightrope between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

[25 : 12] If I'm going to err, if our church is going to err, we're going to tend to err off the sovereignty of God's side. So, I usually balance like this. If I'm going to fall, it's going to be to the sovereignty of God's side of things.

I'm going to neglect the teaching that we are, in fact, responsible for our actions. If others are going to err, many of our Georgia Baptist pastors, it's going to be to the other side.

And they're going to neglect teaching that God is, in fact, in control. You are to act. You are to work out your salvation with fear and trembling because it's God at work in you to accomplish His goodwill.

They'll neglect that side. Why is there so much contention around this? I honestly don't know. But I can tell you that one thing I see as a possibility is that I get held on the tightrope by those who don't embrace this doctrine in the way that I do.

Those men keep me from neglecting the teaching that we are, in fact, responsible, even though God is fully in control. So, let's look at the Scriptures together.

[26 : 29] I want to remind you, before we do that, that Paul's discussion of this doctrine as it relates to the Gentiles and to Israel ends in chapter 11, beginning in verse 33.

He says, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom of knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been

His counselor or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. This is a great doxology. And let's keep in mind that that's where He heads.

In His mind, as He's having a proper understanding of this and He's pinning it down for us, that's where He ends up. He starts in the beginning of verse 9 with a lament over Israel, His brethren according to the flesh, those that He has a dear, dear heart for, His nation.

But He ends in His understanding by praising God that He can't fully grasp the height of God's wisdom and knowledge. So let's recall that.

[27 : 34] This week, my dear mother shared with me Job 26.14. Job says, Behold, these are but the outskirts of His ways and how small a whisper do we hear of Him but the thunder of His power who can understand.

Isn't that good? These are but the outskirts of His ways and how small a whisper do we hear of Him but the thunder of His power who can understand. We are to understand and know what God has given us to understand and know and accept it by faith.

Someday, our minds are going to be blown wide open. So let's let the Scriptures speak. John 6.44. Actually, turn there with me.

I want you to work with me through. We're going to go in order through the New Testament. I have eight Scriptures for you.

Which is not the extent of the Scriptures that speak to this topic. John 6.44. The words of Christ. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

[28 : 51] The Greek word draws is more powerful in the Greek than it is in English. It means literally to drag off. The picture is of us clinging to sin.

Have you ever seen a child throw a tantrum? They don't want to go out the door and you've seen that parent that rather than just like spanking them and dealing with it plays the game and drags them across the floor and they're like clawing on the carpet.

That's the picture of this word. That is the way that the Father draws us to Christ. We don't love him. We love sin. That is our natural inclination before we are brought to life in Christ.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. In other Greek literature that term is used for the bringing of water up from a well. How does that happen?

Does the water willingly climb up the side of the well? Never. Right? Water is fully subjected to the law of gravity. Right? That term there used draw as a physical forcing of something to come to Christ.

[30 : 01] John 15, 16. Jesus says and I don't know how you can get more clear than this but Jesus says you did not choose me but I chose you.

Do I have to give commentary to that? I didn't write this guys. I don't have some special version. Yours might read slightly different but it says the same thing.

Jesus says you did not choose me but I chose you. Acts 13, 48. Paul's in Antioch.

And he preaches a beautiful sermon. I would encourage you to go through the book of Acts and just read the sermons. The times when Paul and Stephen, Peter are before people and they're preaching the gospel.

And at the end of all that it says in verse 48, chapter 13, as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Can we get around that language?

[31 : 04] Those who were in this presence who heard the preaching of the gospel, the word of God went forth and it accomplished what? Exactly what it was intended to accomplish.

As many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 3 through 6. Paul writes to the Ephesian believers, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love he predestined us for adoption as a son through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved. I'm already here so we're just going to do it.

It wasn't my plan. About 2, 8, and 9. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing. Referring to the faith, you'll hear arguments otherwise. Through faith and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God not as a result of works so that no one may boast. All praise and honor belongs to the one who saves us.

[32 : 27] 1 Thessalonians 1, 4, and 5. You can always turn right, I promise. I double checked. 1 Thessalonians 1, 4, and 5.

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

Paul writes to the Thessalonian believers, brothers, we know that you're brothers loved by God and that he's chosen you. Why? Because the gospel came with the power of God not just in word but with the Spirit and with full conviction.

These people's lives had been changed. And Paul witnesses this in Thessalonian believers and what does he say? We know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.

It wouldn't have happened otherwise. 2 Timothy 1, 9. We're almost there. He saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ before the ages began.

[34 : 03] 1 Peter 1, 9. Peter calls us, you don't have to worry about this one, Peter calls us a chosen race. Revelation 13, 8 speaks of what will happen to those whose names have not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

Again, in chapter 17, verse 8. Speaks of the eternal destruction, the praise of the beast that will happen to those whose names were not written in the book of life before the foundation of the world.

So, many, I have heard argue that, yeah, Peter, or Paul, seems to be a bit Calvinistic.

He speaks a lot of this doctrine of election. But what about Jesus? You can find his words in red.

That's what God will say. Right? We've got here Jesus Christ.

We've got a record of what's happening in Acts. We've got Paul writing to a number of the churches. We have Peter. We have John who wrote the book of Revelation. You can't embrace the doctrine of election, not understand it necessarily, but say, the Bible teaches this.

[35 : 19] Then you really should at Matthew tear it out, throw it away. And you know, actually, all of the New Testament is in great way commentary of the Old Testament.

So why don't you just go ahead and take the entire thing and toss it? It doesn't mean you have to be comfortable with it. Again, you don't have to fully grasp how it works out in daily living.

the fact that God is sovereign and completely in control over all things and yet I experience day-to-day choices. Every day, I experience that.

That's what I feel to be true. How do those things interplay? How is it that I'm held fully responsible for all of my actions yet God is totally in control? I don't know. I don't know.

I would like to be the wisest guy and be able to just lay it all out for you. Just have you completely be able to wrap your mind around it. Convince you with my reason that this is the case.

[36 : 25] I can't. I can't do it. There's some gaps in there. But again, rather than writing my own salvation plan and then having to hop around in the scriptures piecemeal together little things that I like that support my opinion of things, stand over God and judge Him, have Him play my game my way, I would much rather be humble and a bit confused.

Put myself as the creation trying to understand how it is that God's working out His glorious plan of salvation in this earth and why I am any part of it at all.

I'll tell you, you hang out with us much, you're going to hear us say, we do not serve God's grace.

We fail to be grace. We did. We are humble recipients of God's work in our lives.

So, you ask the question, why does God's inspired word make us privy to God's elective purpose?

Why? What purpose does it serve? If it seems that it serves more harm than good, it seems that this division and these issues are rooted in this type of teaching, why?

It causes confusion. Why? Why did God do this? How is it practical? Have you ever heard the term practical theology? I despise it.

[37 : 57] High theologians talk about practical theology. All theology is practical. The study of God has reality for our lives every single day. So, never buy the lie that there are some things that are just to know and there are some things that you know so that you can do.

We know so that we can do, think properly, deal with emotions properly. So, how is this then practical for us?

And I have three things for you and this is going to wrap us to an end. Three things that the doctrine of election accomplishes and was intended to accomplish.

Firstly, is to serve as a comfort to our souls. It's where we started in Romans chapter 8, verse 28. I think you guys all know, 828, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

And then he goes on into his explanation. For those he before knew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. Because this life is going to be difficult.

[39 : 00] We are going to suffer. Can you imagine how precious the doctrine of election would have been to first century Jews? Those who were paraded in Rome into the Colosseum and fed the lions.

Those who were put on stakes and lit on fire to light Nero's garden parties. Those today who when they accept Christ, they lose all ties to their family.

They may not be able to go to university. They may be thrown in prison. They may be killed. Can you imagine how precious this doctrine would be to them? But we're all so comfortable.

Right? We don't suffer. We sit on our couches and we read our Bibles and say, no, that's not my God. It is your God and it's for you because you begin to live for Christ.

You will suffer. You will be persecuted. Even in this nation, we begin to put ourselves out there for him. People are not going to like us.

[40 : 05] beyond that, we suffer physically. I have health issues. That's part of the suffering that's included in this. And praise God, I know that I am his in all the things I'm experiencing.

Everything that goes on in my life, internally, externally, are all for my good. Further, I am fairly wretched. I sin still.

I've been delivered from it and yet I enslave myself to it. Praise God that he's in control of my salvation. That I can't do anything to reject that.

I have been bought. I am in him. He holds me firmly in his hand. Nothing can pluck me out of his hand, even myself. John 10, 27-30, Jesus says, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand.

[41 : 12] I and the father are one. The doctrine of election does that. It serves as a comfort to our souls. Secondly, it causes us to praise God.

Rightly understood, it causes us to praise God. Malachi 1, 2, and 3. I told you we would talk at least in brief about that phrase at the end of verse 13, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

Let's understand the context. Malachi 1, 2, and 3, God says, I have loved you, says the Lord, but you say, speaking to Israel, how have you loved us?

God says to Israel, I have loved you. And their response is, how have you loved us? And he said, is not Esau Jacob's brother? By the flesh, descendants together, declares the Lord, yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated.

I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert. I have loved you by bestowing blessing on you who did not deserve it.

[42 : 27] That's the context. to the praise of his glorious grace. Ephesians 1, 5, and 6 says, he predestined us for adoption of sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will.

We read this earlier, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved. To cause us to praise him.

We were in 1 Peter 1, 9. I've got to go back there. Because I didn't write it down. 1 Peter 1, 9. Peter says, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

I'm almost there. No, not 1 Peter 1, 9. 2 Peter 1, 9. Nope. 2, 9. I'm sorry. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.

Why? That you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. That we might be objects of mercy so that we will make God's merciful attributes known to the world.

[43 : 35] Which brings me to the third. Practical reality, the doctrine of election. The doctrine of election should encourage us to evangelism.

You hear me? The doctrine of election should encourage us to evangelism. the doctrine. I'm going to do what he wants to do.

Why should I have any part in it? It's a good objection. I can see the logic in that. But in fact, it should encourage us to it. 2 Timothy 2.

10. Listen carefully to these words of Paul. He says, after talking about some suffering he's endured, he says, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

So Paul doesn't neglect his responsibility in carrying the gospel, but Paul recognizes that he's the means to the end. That he's the tool being used to accomplish God's purpose.

[44 : 37] So he endures the suffering so that he can be involved in that process. Why does God not just snap his fingers, save those he's going to save, leave the others behind, done deal?

Because he loves his people. And he wants us to proclaim his name because it's good for us. It is a great joy to join God in his eternal purpose.

Let me speak from history. Many, many great men of missions and evangelism, I would argue some of the greatest men of missions and evangelism held to the doctrine of election not loosely, they held to it tightly.

Let me run through a few of them for you. Martin Luther catalyzed the Protestant Reformation, so loved the word of God that he by himself stood against the Catholic Church, loved the doctrine of election.

William Tyndale translated the first English Bible in its entirety from the original Hebrew and Greek. There was a man that wanted to see the gospel advance through his scriptures.

[45 : 57] John Knox led the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. George Whitfield is the best-known preacher of the British Great Awakening.

Charles Simeon, we talked about him a bit ago, leader of the evangelical movement of the Church of England. William Carey was a Baptist missionary to India, and he founded the Baptist Missionary Society.

Adoniram Judson, the first international missionary sent from North America. Good fact for you who want to be international missionaries. He's a Baptist missionary, and he went and served in Burma for 40 years.

John G. Patton, one of my favorites, from Scotland also, went and served in the New Hebrides, a group of islands now called Vanuatu, cannibals.

He lived for three years on an island and saw one convert, and the entire time he was in danger of being killed and eaten. He left and came back and saw the whole island converted to Christ.

[47 : 03] When he first got there, his wife of two years and his newborn son both died of a disease, and he stayed and he served, held dearly the doctrine of election.

William Wilberforce, familiar with him? He gets talked about a lot here lately. He's the British politician that spent his life ending the English slave trade. Untold thousands of people owe their life to William Wilberforce, and he endured the lifelong struggle to end that slave trade because he knew God was in control.

John Newton, he was a slave trader, became an Anglican preacher. He wrote Amazing Grace. You know those precious words that we all sing with such gusto, written by a guy that believed in the doctrine of election, when he says Amazing Grace?

That's what he's talking about. Jonathan Edwards, was heralded as the greatest theological mind that North America has ever produced, and was a key figure in the North American Great Awakening.

a great evangelist. Charles Spurgeon, the British Baptist preacher, it's estimated that he preached to 10 million plus people in his lifetime.

[48 : 24] 10 million people. And often throughout his life, he preached 10 sermons a week. I barely feel like I get through one every week. He preached 10 sermons a week.

A man who loved the doctrine of election. And then I've got to tell you about my favorite. I'm going to read you a quote from him. George Mueller. If you get to know me much at all, you know that George Mueller is one of my heroes.

In the earlier stages of his life, he pastored a church and he had an orphanage. And throughout his life, was directly and indirectly involved with caring for 10,000 or more orphans that came through his care.

He traveled later in his life over 200,000 miles preaching and sharing the gospel. I guess the orphanage was running efficiently and he took off.

He traveled around the states. 200,000 miles. He started a missionary society that supported 187 international missionaries. Hudson Taylor being one of them.

[49 : 30] You guys are missionary historians. Hudson Taylor who worked in China for many, many years. And when I say supported, it doesn't mean that he wrote a little bit of money each month and it was part of their support.

His missionary society fully funded 187 missionaries around the world. A phenomenal, phenomenal activist for the kingdom of God.

And I want you to listen to what he wrote. Many will say in his autobiography he didn't write an autobiography, he journaled. But he wrote this. He said, Before this period I had been much opposed to the doctrines of election, particular redemption and final preserving grace, so much so that I called election a devilish doctrine.

Some of you sit there that way this morning. I called election a devilish doctrine. Before I read on, let me tell you just an interesting side story about him. In a gathering of believers sharing the Bible, he firmly supported what is called paedobaptism, the baptism of infants, and rejected credobaptism, which is believer's baptism, what we hold to here.

Firmly supported the one, rejected the other, and afterwards an old lady, elderly lady came up to him and said, Mr. Mueller, I would suggest to you that you not draw opinions until you have read the scripture concerning them and walked away.

[50 : 59] and he was so convicted, really realized that he hadn't really addressed the scriptures on the matter, that he went and he read the whole New Testament through with that in mind, baptism.

What does the Bible teach about baptism? At the end of that was converted. He then believed in credobaptism, in believer's baptism.

Then he made it a habit in his life to do that with anything he didn't have an answer to. Isn't that phenomenal? When it was an issue that would have been addressed primarily in New Testament, he would just read the New Testament, but it was an issue that was addressed throughout the scriptures, he would read the entire Bible with that topic in mind to gain an understanding of it. So here we go. I went to the Word, reading the New Testament from the beginning with a particular reference to these truths. To my great astonishment, I found that the passages which speak decidedly for election and preserving grace were about four times as many as those which speak apparently against these truths.

And even those few, shortly after, when I had examined and understood them, served to confirm me in the above doctrines. In the course of time, it pleased God then to show to me the doctrines of grace in a way in which I had not seen them before.

[52 : 20] At first, I hated them. If this were true, I could do nothing at all in the conversion of sinners, as all would depend on God and on the work of His Spirit. But when it pleased God to reveal these truths to me, and my heart was brought to such a state that I could say, I am not only content simply to be a hammer, an axe, or a saw in God's hands, but I shall count it an honor to be taken up and used by Him in any way.

And if sinners are converted through my instrumentality, for my inmost soul, I will give Him all the glory. Catch what he said. When he came to the place where he could say, not only am I content to be a tool in God's hands, but I'm also content with whatever the outcome of that may be.

When sinners are converted, I will give Him all the glory. That's what he just said. Then he says, when he arrived at that place, the Lord gave me to see fruit.

The Lord gave me to see fruit in abundance. Sinners were converted by scores. And ever since, God has used me in one way or other in his service. How precious the doctrine of election.

We're not going to arrive at all the answers in the next couple of weeks. There are some answers. It is worth wrestling with. But at the end of it all, you have to decide if you're going to be humble and submit yourself to the scriptures, to the God who wrote them, or if you're going to be arrogant, and stand in judgment of them.

[53 : 51] And I know I'm saying harsh things to you, but it's true. The rest of chapter nine. Chapter nine has within it twelve Old Testament quotes. Twelve Old Testament quotes.

Nine of them are first person God quotes. So God wrote all scripture inspired. Nine of them, though, are first person record of what God has to say.

And what I believe Paul is saying to us when we ask questions that the scriptures don't answer is, be quiet. Who are you, oh man?

