



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Doctrine of Election – II: Its Proof”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege and opportunity to look again into the Holy Scriptures. We thank Thee for the teaching contained within them and particularly, Lord, we thank Thee for the fact that thou hast known the numbers of the hairs upon our heads from eternity past, that there is nothing that is hidden from Thee.

And we thank Thee that thou art not only all-powerful but all wise. And, therefore, we may count upon the things that Thou hast done to be the perfect things, the things that will most honor and glorify Thee and will also be most suitable for our good. And we thank Thee too, Lord, for the dark things in the counsel of God. We know they are not dark in heaven. But we thank Thee that thou hast revealed to us in thy word the things that we need to give us diligence searching of the Scriptures. Enable us to discover Thy mind and Thy will and for the things that are dark with us. We thank Thee that we can leave them in the hands of our wise and omnipotent and omnipresent God. And so tonight we commit this pledge to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon us.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now, tonight we are turning to the second part of our doctrine of election, its proof and we have come up to this point to this place in our studies.

Remember last time we discussed Roman I in our outline “The Biblical Proof of Election.” We looked at the testimony of the Scriptures, the expressed declarations of the word of God concerning the doctrine of election. Then we pointed to Paul’s defense of that principle and said that the apostle defended it by the facts of biblical history and the doctrine of divine sovereignty and I assured you that we would look at that in more detail tonight. And that’s what we’re going to do.

And then in our outline capital B, we looked at the terms involved in the doctrine. We discussed the word for election, the word for foreordination or predestination. We discussed the word foreknowledge and for knowledge. And we discussed the word for purpose. And I think the important thing that we should remember from our discussion of the words is this, foreknowledge is not simply knowledge beforehand but rather emphasized the character of the relationship into which God entered with those of whom he chose. It stresses the fact that God entered into an intimate relationship with us.

It does not say that he looked down through the centuries and saw who would believe and determined that he would choose then. In the Bible, foreknowledge is never of a “what” but of a “whom.” Romans says, “whom he foreknew” not “what he foreknew.” Whom he foreknew he did predestinate. He then pointed out that that was the Hebraic way of expressing choice or foreordination. So that foreknowledge emphasizes the character of this relationship into which we enter when God chooses us. Predestination emphasizes the aim of that relationship. We are to be like the Son.

And then the third word “election” emphasizes the selective process by which God expressed his love toward those whom he had chosen. But these three words foreknowledge, predestination or foreordination, and election refer to the same thing but just in different ways.

We also looked at the word purpose which is a word that is very broad in scope and covers all that God does by way of election, foreordination, foreknowledge. In fact, it includes even the end of the process. And we gave you a tentative definition of

election. Election is the sovereign act of God in choosing for salvation in Christ Jesus those he had predestinated according to his own purpose.

Now, that’s where we are. Tonight Roman II – “The Biblical Place of Election Within God’s Decrees.” And in order to express this, I have put an outline on the board which is uninspiring. [Laughter] But I would like to just go over it for two or three minutes to explain what I have in mind by this outline.

In the Bible, when the election of God is referred to it is traced back to God’s love or his good pleasure. As far as the Bible is concerned, the reason that he chose me and you, if he has chosen you or me, the reason that chooses men is not because we are handsomer or prettier, because we would believe, because there was something in us that would respond to his grace. It is not because we have some particular merit that others do not have, some disposition toward God. There’s absolutely nothing in us. He has chosen us because he loves us, because it was his good pleasure to elect us.

Now, that is all the Bible says. And when I was praying and talking about the dark side of God’s counsel, I mean those things that God has not told us about. And he has not told us why, although I think when we get through we will have some idea, he has not told us precisely why we should not go back beyond his love, but his love is the ultimate source of his actions towards us. Out of his love or good pleasure has come with decrees.

Now, the word decree is a word that is used in different ways by theologians, but we’re using it here in the sense of that counsel of God by which he determines everything in his universe. Everything that has ever happened or ever will happen is part of God’s decree.

Now, there are some things that do not come from the precise, positive, definite action of God. In other words, there is a decretive will of God by which everything is known by God and is determined by God. And there is a preceptive will of God which refers to those things that he positively desires for men arising out of his nature, his

holiness, his love and so on. But there are many things that happen in God’s universe which are not in accordance with his nature. They are within, however, his decretive will, his decree which governs everything. He has apparently determined that there is greater good and greater glory for God in allowing certain things to happen that are contrary to his preceptive will.

Now, we know that because things do happen that are contrary to God’s preceptive will. Sin does take place, and God is not directly responsible for that but he has decreed that sin should be allowed to come to pass and exist, at least for a time. So God’s decree covers everything.

Now, in God’s will, he has created the material world and an immaterial world. Some of these terms we might be able to improve on in time, this is an outline that has not been subjected to a great deal of criticism. But he has created a material world. We know this as the heavens and the earth. We are learning a great deal about God’s material world. The chances are even with all of the scientific information that we have we have only seen a smattering of what God has done with the material world.

Now, in the material world, I’ll just follow this through. God has not only created the material world but he has decreed that he should preserve it. And he does preserve it. There are passages of Scripture which would support all of these points, by the way, but we cannot put them down on a diagram like this. But, for example, Paul says in Colossians that all things hold together in him. He preserved them. There isn’t a single breath that one individual breathes, not even an animal, which is not within the will of God. Daniel speaks about the God in his hand by breathe is. In fact, you can only be sure of one thing and that is the breath that you are drawing right now. You cannot be surer than that. But God preserves all of this material world, the heavens and the earth. And his providence is that doctrine by which he arranges the material world in accordance with his purpose so that it contributes with his overall plan. And ultimately,

of course, the heavens and the earth shall be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth and that is the end of his program for the material world.

Now, in the immaterial world, we have angelic beings and we have men. And I put our Lord in the third category although, of course, Jesus Christ is a man. He is a God man. In his case our Lord Jesus Christ, he was born of a virgin and the whole story of his life is expressed here. And finally reaches its conclusion in his glorification which has already taken place our Lord has received the glorified body and that’s issued in the glory of God.

Now, he has also created men. And in the history of men, some men according to the Bible are reprobate and their end is perdition. There’s no way that we can escape that. The Bible definitely states that there are some who shall be separated from God forever. They end in perdition. The purpose of God for believers is set forth in these texts. Foreknowledge and predestination, which are really clear texts of the same thing. God knows by reason of his love to whom he is to exercise his grace. He foreordains that they shall one day be like his Son Jesus Christ and he chooses them in the light of his predestination or foreordination of them. In time, when they come into this world, they are called by the Holy Spirit, effectually. We will study calling later on. They are justified when they respond to that call by believing in the ultimate end of those who believe in Jesus Christ is their glorification and glory to God.

He has also created angels. There are two classes of angels. There are fallen angels. There are unfallen angels. We do not know a great deal about them. We’ve studied, at least what I know about them, in the spring. We know there are some who are fallen and the Lake of Fire is prepared for them. Our Lord states that in Matthew chapter 25. So the end of the fallen angels is perdition. Some of the angels did not fall. And their ultimate end is that they continue in their state, their unborn state, and bring glory to God. So this is, in simple form, an expression of the decree of God, which arises out of his good pleasure, results in the creation of the material and immaterial world and

God’s purpose toward the elect and towards Jesus Christ. We have talked also to put a lot of other things in here, for example, such as when Jesus Christ is called the elective God and all of the things that happen to him but you cannot put out the whole of the Bible in your outline, at least I cannot.

Now, tonight we want to turn, thirdly, to the biblical exposition of election. And I’m going to have to give you the outline since I’m going to leave that on the board for a few minutes for those of you who like to come up afterwards and copy it down. You can do it. So, capital A in the outline after Roman III – “The Biblical Exposition of the Election.” Capital A, The Central Passages. The Central Passages. We are going to look at the two passages that have to do with the doctrine of election. And Arabic I -Romans 9:6 through 29. Romans 9 6 through 29.

So take your little New Testaments or your Bibles and turn to the ninth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans. And while you are finding Romans 9, I’m going to say a few brief introductory words regarding this chapter. This passage is undoubtedly the greatest extended treatment of the election problem. One thing to be clarified before we proceed, this chapter is a chapter which has as a very strong emphasis the election of the nation Israel, their fall, and the election of certain Gentiles. Unfortunately because Romans chapter 9 does treat the subject of national election, some have made the mistake, and it is a mistake, to say that Romans 9 does not have to do with individual election but has to do with national election. And I want to say that we cannot flee behind this to escape the doctrine of election.

Now, the reason why we cannot is this. What is the election of a nation? If it is unjust for God to elect one and pass by another, though we can believe that he may elect a nation and pass by nations, if we feel that it is unjust for God to choose one and pass by another, does not that make him even more unjust to choose one nation and pass by more nations? So the excuse which is designed to overthrow the doctrine of individual election, overthrows the doctrine of national election as well. What is the election of a

nation but the election of individuals of some many units, we may put it, within a nation. But we’re going to see as we read Romans 9 that Paul does not just think about the election of nations. We only have to read near the end of the chapter or near the end of the first section of the chapter when he says verse 10, “And not only but also Rebekah being pregnant of one of Isaac our father. For the children, for they having not yet been born, nor having done anything good or worthless that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of the one he calls, it was said to her that the elder shall serve the younger.” As it stands written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.” And you will notice that in verse 11, reference is made to the children, those who have not yet been born or who have not yet done anything good or evil. I was reading from the Greek text and that’s why it is not quite like the text that you have. So when we come to Romans 9 let us not attempt to say this chapter has to do with national election and not with individual election. Remember the connection between Romans 9 and the preceding.

Paul has written us in the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans an exposition of his final salvation. He has taken us from the doctrine of sin and condemnation in the first few chapters, part of the third of Romans, through the doctrine of justification through the doctrine of sanctification on through the doctrine of glorification in chapter 8 and we have hardly mentioned at all the Jewish problem or what about God’s story of the nation Israel. And so a man who was Jew listening to Paul’s exposition might well say when he finished the 8th chapter well Paul he set forth a doctrine of salvation but what about the chosen people? You do not seem to have said anything about them. You have said nothing much about the promises which God gave us and which he said were ours unconditionally because he gave them to Abraham not on the basis of Abraham’s good works, not on the basis of any merit, but he gave them out of his grace. And he told Abraham that Abraham should have a land, he would have a people, and by him all the families of the earth would be blessed. And furthermore

Paul he confirms that source by a sacrifice that clearly told the unconditional character of those promises because when the animals were slain only God marched down to free those animals. And Abram was not invited to follow, for Abram had nothing to do with the fulfillment of them. It was all grace.

Now, Paul, either your gospel is true and the Jewish promises have been nullified or the promises still hold true, and the gospel that you’re preaching is false and Jesus Christ whom you preach is an imposter. And so the apostles in Romans 9, 10, and 11 points out that the question is not a simple either/or. It’s not even my gospel is true and the Jewish promises are nullified, but it is my gospel is true and the Jewish promises are still Israel’s unconditional promises. And in the 11th chapter, he states that when he says, “And so all Israel shall be graced.” This section is really a theopathy. That is, it is a vindication of God’s dealings with men from the standpoint of justice, a theopathy. Nine, ten, and eleven is one of the greatest sections in all of the Bible. And if you don’t understand it, study it because you can never hope to be a knowledgeable Christian in the things of God if you do not know Romans 9, 10, and 11.

Paul begins the ninth chapter by saying, “I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience testifying together with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great grief and unceasing pain in my heart.” And he says this, in the next two verses, because those of his people who were the object of all of the blessing of God are now in apostasy. And what makes him most grieved of all is the fact that not only did they have all of those promises of the law, the preachers, all of the offerings, all of the revelation of God contained in them but from them came the Messiah Jesus Christ. God overall blessed forever.

Now, then in the 6th verse he begins his explanation of why Israel is now in rejection. He says biblical history would have given us an inkling of what was going to happen. And then he says in verse 14 through verse 29, “Divine sovereignty is seen in Israel’s rejection.”

Now, I’m just going to begin at verse 6 and read along and make a few comments as we go along. And I want you to see that first of all he just traces back Israel’s history. Goes back into their history and shows that this principle of election was something they should have known if they had read the Old Testament properly. And it’s a masterful treatment. It shows us that Paul was a student of the Bible. You know how important that is.

Now, listen Paul says - I’m reading from the Greek text so if it’s slightly different from yours you’ll understand that I’m reading the inspired text and you’re reading a simple translation. [Laughter]

“It is not that the word of God has fallen out. The fact that Israel now does not appear to be enjoying the blessing of God that does not mean that God has been unfaithful to his promises. It is not that the word of God has fallen out, for not all who are of Israel, these are Israel.”

Now, it is very important that we understand what Paul means here. He is not saying that a Gentile believer is an Israelite as if to say not all who are of Israel, these are Israel. In other words, the term Israel is a term that includes both Jew and Gentile. That’s not what he’s saying. Never in the New Testament does the word Israel ever mean anything but Israel.

What does he mean when he says not all who are Israel are really Israel? Well, he means that within the company of Israelites there are two classes: believing Israelites and unbelieving Israelites. And the promises pertain not to the unbelieving Israelites but to the believing Israelites. Now, that’s important that we grasp that. “Not all who are of Israel.” That is within the company of the descendants of Abraham, these are Israel.

“Not all who are of Israel, these are Israel. Nor because they are seed of Abraham are all kindred. But in Isaac, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

Now, that’s an amazing statement. “In Isaac shall Thy seed be called.” In other words, Abraham had some children that did not partake of the promises. Who did he have? Well, Ishmael? Ishmael was Abraham’s seed but not Abraham’s seed in the sense of belonging to the seed that did inherit the promise. Ishmael was not in the line of the chosen. Ah, but someone would say Ishmael was not the son of Sarah. Every son of Sarah surely would have been in the seed. The reason Ishmael is not is because Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar. And so now the apostle anticipates that objection. Would you have known the Bible well enough at this point to say wait Paul, wait a minute. Ishmael, Ishmael was Abraham’s son that’s right but Ishmael was not Sarah’s son. Would you have known the Bible that well? Could you raise your hand immediately and said wait Paul just a minute. I have an objection. Well, if you couldn’t you need to study the Bible a little more.

Now, then let’s listen to a second illustration, verse 8,

“That is, not the children of the flesh, these are children of God: but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.”

It isn’t enough, you see, to be a son of the flesh to be a seed. One must be a son of the promise for the word of the promise is this, “According to this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.” Isaac is a child of promise. Ishmael is not. Isaac is a child of the word choice. Ishmael is not. “And not only,” to answer your objection which you have raised, “and not only but Rebekah also being pregnant of one.” Great emphasis in the Greek text. “Being pregnant of one, of Isaac our father.” For they not yet having been born, nor having done anything good or evil worth it, that the purpose of God

according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said to her, that the elder shall serve the younger” or the greater shall serve the latter. “As it stands written, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated.”

Now, in the case of Rebecca, who was Isaac’s wife, Esau and Jacob were born. Rebecca was the mother of twins. She was the mother of twins by one man. We have known that she was the mother of twins by one man but Paul goes out of his way to stress the fact of one. She was pregnant of one. And the two children, Jacob and Esau, have the same father and the same mother. Same father same mother before they had had time to be born or to do anything good or evil, it was said the elder shall serve the younger. “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.” No problem of complex parentage here. Yet the destiny of the two is infinitely different. On the divine side, it is election. On the human side, it works out that Jacob is a believer and Esau is an unbeliever. And the proof text of it all is that Paul says is “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

I said last time that we have a great deal of difficulty at times with “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated” and almost invariably men have difficulty with “Esau have I hated.” Whereas, really, the greatest problem is how God could love Jacob. The truth of the matter is the greatest problem is how he could love anybody except me. [Laughter] That’s not the way we see it. Listen, the greatest problem of all is how he could love you. How he could love me? I can understand how he might hate everybody because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Now, this text here, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated” has caused some problems before because men do not like to be told that God is a God of love and that he hated anyone. There is no personal animosity involved in this. Many of the commentators have pointed out that the Hebrew idiom “to hate” in many contexts seems to mean to prefer. In other words, what it really means is that I have preferred Jacob to Esau. And we also have illustrations told us of customs such as this, if a rich man resolves to adopt a child and he selects one of two brothers, he is said in the Hebrew idiom to

love the one and to hate the other. He doesn’t really hate the other. He may not even love the other one that he has chosen, but he has chosen and in the Hebrew idiom he is said to love and to hate.

Now, I want you to turn with me, if you will, to Luke chapter 14 in verse 26. Our Lord is speaking and he says, “If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and further his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” Now, surely our Lord did not mean that in order to be his disciple we must hate our father, hate our mother, hate our brothers, hate our children. No, we understand that that means simply this that when the interest of family are opposed to the interest of God, we are to be so interested in doing the will of God, so prefer the will of God that it is as if we hate everything else but God’s will, so intent upon doing his will. It means to love more but it means to love more in the deepest of senses.

Will you turn to Matthew chapter 10 verse 37 and I think you can see this as we compare these two verses, the one in Luke 14:26 and Matthew chapter 10 verse 37. Here in Matthew in a passage that is very closely parallel with the one in Luke. We read, “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” And so to hate is to love more than. So when we read, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated,” it does not mean that God had personal animosity toward Esau. As a matter of fact, if you read Esau’s history you would discover that God did not hate Esau. Even though Esau was a profane man, he blessed Esau with many blessings. But Paul has made his point and that is that the two children, Jacob and Esau, before they had done anything good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might fail, he said, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.” His choice did not depend upon what they have done.

Now, this should be evident to us, I think, from the facts of the word of God but let’s go on. What are you thinking at this point? Well, if you’re like most people you’re saying down in your heart almost as a Christian may even be trying to repress it, God hates Esau. It’s not right. Is that the way you feel? You know what that says, if that’s the

way you feel? And some of you are looking as if you don’t feel that way. But piety of a false character will not get you anywhere.

Do you know why you feel that way? It’s because you have an old nature. And when the proof of God comes, we react to it, every one of us, we react against it. That’s because we don’t fear. And the process of bringing us to the knowledge of the Lord and bringing us into the conformity to the will of God in our thoughts and in all of our life and in all of our living requires the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit over a period of time and is never completed until the coming of the presence of the Lord. But Paul is very sympathetic. He knows what you’re thinking, and so we read in verse 14, “What then shall we say then? There unrighteousness with God is there?” I’m reading again from the Greek text. And as Paul puts it, “What then shall we say? There is not unrighteousness with God? Is there? God forbid.” Good heavens no, it has been rendered *meganoito*. That’s the Greek way of expressing a strong negative wish, may it not come to be, good heavens no.

Now, you will notice that the apostle really answers this question in two ways. Verse 14 he says, “There is not unrighteousness with God is there?” Well, he’s going to deal with biblical principles from the standpoint of God. And then he is going to say in verse 19 after he finishes that he will say to me then, “Why doth he still find fault? For who hath resisted his will?” And there he is going to look at it from the manly side. So he will look at this question of unrighteousness and injustice from the godly and then from the manly side.

Let’s read what he has to say. “What then shall we say? There is not unrighteousness with God is there? God forbid.” Or to explain he says to Moses, “I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and compassion upon whom I have compassion.” In other words, he is perfectly justified in the expression of his mercy and his compassion. Consequently then, notice verse 16, “It is not of the one who will nor of the one who run, but of God that who shows mercy.” In other words, God’s expression

of his birthing to us does not come from our will, human volition. Whenever you hear that a man comes to faith in Christ because of human volition, you can be sure that that is contrary to the Bible. The only way in which we can be said to come to God through human volition is if we recognize that God has already worked in our will. “For it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

Now, this is not just Paul, John says, “As many as received him to them gave he power to become the children of God even for them that believe on his name which were born not of the will of man, not of the will of the flesh, not of blood but of God.” Men are born not by the exercise of human volition. They are born of God. And I do think that we do exercise our will, we exercise our wills, but we exercise our wills because God has already initiated that action. Paul says work out your own salvation with fear and trembling who believeth for it is God that worketh in you both the will and to do what is his pleasure. So when a man responds in human volition to take the offer of salvation from God, he is not saved because of his human volition. He was saved because of God. Who has initiated the process whereby his will acts positively to receive the grace of God.

Please have that deep in your minds for otherwise you shall fall into Pelagianism or salvation by works. If salvation depends upon my will and your will and you respond and I don’t, then you have something that I don’t have. Whereas God says that we all have nothing. Let me put it this way. If your will responds to the gospel and you believe it’s because, as Dr. Barnhouse used to like to say, “God has jiggled your willer.” [Laughter] You see a man wills out of what he is. I will to go to see the Colts play the Cowboys Saturday afternoon because I already love football. And all the actions of our wills are the expressions of what they are, already. And so if I receive Christ and you don’t, it isn’t because my will is a will of faith and yours is not. It’s because I have a predisposition to the respond and I exercise my will. And that predisposition has come from God. “He has jiggled my willer.”

Well I should read the other side of it, verse 17, “For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, for this very cause have I raised thee up, that I might shew forth in thee my power, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Consequently then, whomsoever he wills, he shows mercy too and whomsoever he will, he hardens. Oh that’s hard too. He hardens who he wills. Isn’t it striking the way Paul has taken these two? He has taken Moses and he’s taken Pharaoh and he’s taken text what were spoken of these two men. And who is the natural enemy of Moses? Pharaoh. One is a vessel of mercy, the other is a vessel of wrath. And Paul has selected the statements from the word that express the will of God.

O but Paul, if it is true that God elects one and passes by the other, if it is true that he shows mercy upon one and he hardens another, how in the world is he going to be able to judge men? Well, Paul answers that question, notice verse 19 here he looks at it from the manly side, “You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ O man, indeed who art thou to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to the one who has formed it, ‘Why have you made me thus?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, of the same lump to make a vessel under honor and another for dishonor? Does not God have the right as the great potter to do his will? Of course, he has right to do his will.

As a matter of fact, the facts are that he has shown great mercy. But is God willing to show his wrath and to make known his power, hath born with much long suffering, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? And then might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy which he has prepared before for glory. What becomes of your complaints of injustice? Rather striking that Paul actually does not try to answer that last question which he raised in verse 19. He just repels it. He says the man that would bring a question against God, against his character is not in the right spiritual relationship to start with.

Now a great deal has been made over a couple of statements here and I want to say a word about them. Will you notice verse 22, “But if God, wanting or wishing to show His wrath and to make known His power, bore with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, which He prepared unto glory.” It has often been said that God prepares vessels unto glory but the vessels of wrath are fitted for destruction. It is not God who is responsible for them.

In other words, it is often said that it’s as if Paul has made a special effort to avoid a double predestination. But what has Paul just said in verse 18, “Consequently then, whom he wishes he shows mercy too and he hardens whom he wishes.” Is that not what it is like? Notice verse 21, “Does not the potter have power over the clay of the same lump to make the vessel on the one hand to honor and the vessel to dishonor.” Are we going to say that God does not have that authority? Paul would have said “No, God has that authority.” And so I am not at all persuaded by that argument that fitted unto the destruction does not mean it was not a work of God. If God could prepare some vessels unto honor and unto glory that is his right. And if he should pass by others, that is his right.

The truth of the matter is he does not have save to anybody, not anybody. Men are sinners and under divine judgment because of their own sin. If God did not save a single person, he could be absolutely just, absolutely just. He is not compelled to deliver Abram from bowing down to sticks and stones with God before God appeared to him. He is not compelled to save the people on the cross. He is not compelled to transform the murderous Paul into the Apostle Paul and he is not compelled to save you or anyone else. The fact that has saved you is a work of grace.

Now, that is what Paul is saying. These are difficult words. Do you find them hard? I hope you do. They are hard words, but they are in the Bible.

When I was in the insurance business in Birmingham, Alabama, and just beginning to read the Greek New Testament, I had been trained in classical Greek in college. And I was beginning to read the Greek New Testament and I have a friend who was a graduate of Dallas seminary. And we used to read the New Testament together and we have another friend who was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and he was a great believer in the sovereignty of God. And we used to debate these things back and forth. This was twenty-five or more years ago. And I can still remember my friend saying, “Well if you’re going to get rid of election you’re going to have to tear the ninth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans out of the Bible and do you want to do that?” And, of course then, I said, “Oh no I wouldn’t want to do that.” And I still feel that way. I don’t want to do that. It’s there. It’s a difficult chapter. It’s hard but that’s what Paul says.

Now, I want you to turn with me if you will back to Ephesians chapter 1 and we’re going to see at least. We’ll have to hurry. Actually, I spent more time than I intended to on these verses, but we’re going to see that Romans chapter 9 is not the only passage that Paul has in which he discusses this question of election. In Ephesians chapter 1 in verse 3, we read, and you’ll notice this is very much in agreement with the Pauline passage of Romans 9. And further there is no question about this having to do with the individual. I don’t think that other passage, there’s any question there either.

But you’ll notice this has to deal with individual election primarily. Verse 3 of chapter 1, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly in Christ, according as He chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Most of our commentaries on the great text and many of our translations as a result of the commentaries translate that according as the cause. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens within Christ because he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. That’s why we’re blessed with every spiritual blessing

in the heavenly places in Christ. It is because we have been chosen. Because we have been chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

We often sing “O happy day that fixed my choice on thee my Savior and my God. As a matter of fact, the choice had been made long before we ever sang a hymn like that. We had been chosen in him before the foundation of the world. Let’s read on, notice the next verse 5, “Having predestinated us, having predestined us.” Ah, if this is the correct translation of this word “because he has chosen us” “having predestinated us,” well then he chose us because he has predestinated us. That’s what I put on this outline over here, his foreknowledge, his predestination and out of that came his election. He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world having predestinated us to the adoptive son. That is that we should be like Jesus Christ. Predestination has to do with goal of this process of election. Election has to do with the selection process and foreknowledge has to do with the intimate relationship into which he enters when he chose us.

Now, I think that we can leave Ephesians for a moment. Well, I guess we should finish the sentence. According to the good pleasure of his will. According to the good pleasure of his will. That’s why he did all of this. His love, his good pleasure if it is decreed, if it is foreknowledge and predestination which resulted in our election and because of our election, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. What a tremendous thing, I have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly in Jesus Christ. Now, isn’t that wonderful? Come on now even if you cannot understand election you can enjoy that can’t you. [Laughter] If you believe in Jesus Christ. And if you have any question about whether you’re elect, you know what you could do. You can settle it right now. Put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Now, if you don’t want to believe in Jesus Christ, how can you object to the doctrine of election?

May I sum this up? Capital B in my outline is the ground of election. The answer to the question why does God elect anyone to salvation is the crux of the entire subject and there are three possible answers. I’ll state them.

First, God elects those who are good. Wouldn't it be a sad thing if God elected those who are good? Wouldn't it be a bad thing? How many of you would be elected? Would you raise your hands? How many of you, really, would be elected if God chose the good people? How many of you? Would you raise your hands? There are like three of you. [Laughter] There wouldn't be a one in this auditorium, not a one. In fact, if I'm my worst and go out all over the earth and men were honest, not a one would raise their hand. And I'm glad God doesn't choose on those grounds.

And the other is that God elects those who he foresaw would believe.

And the third possible answer is God elects those who has purpose to save their faith in Jesus Christ. Is the reason in man or in God? Can we really say that salvation is of the Lord, if God elects those whom he foresaw would believe? There would have to be something in man for some to have faith and some have not.

For you see if we are to believe that salvation is of the Lord, we must believe logically that God elects those who he has purpose to save through faith in Christ. The Armenian said he chose me because I first chose him. We say, I say, I chose him because he first chose me. Times up. We're going to have to stop.

I'll allow you about twelve minutes and at 8:15 we will start exposition of Isaiah 61 and 62 and I still have a few things to say about election. But next time we're going to deal with all of the problems like how can we believe in election and at the same time believe that men are responsible? How can we believe in election and believe in the freedom of man? How can we really believe in election and at the same time admit and believe that God will judge the non-elect? Endless questions, the next two times.

But next Monday night will be our last session before Christmas. We will meet again January the fifth. But we're going to have two sessions on the problems. So if you're interested in the problems and I feel that most of you are probably more interested in the problems than in the positive exposition because you know these things are in the Bible. You're just troubled because they are. [Laughter] So next Monday night we'll

begin to patiently answer all of these problems so that you will enter into joy of election and the understanding of at least a great deal of it.

Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this wonderful doctrine. We praise Thee that we have been chosen in him before the foundation of the world. May we rejoice in the salvation of the Lord.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.