

## **6: Predestination**

### **Preamble**

We've previously thought about salvation accomplished: the once-for-all-time and wholly-sufficient work of Christ. We're now turning to think about salvation applied: how it is that we can benefit from all that Christ has done. In our last session we thought about the doctrine of union with Christ – how it is that I might be joined together with Jesus in order to benefit with all that he has done. Over the next few weeks we're going to consider several dimensions of the salvation that Christian people enjoy in Jesus.

As we begin let's pray – a prayer of John Calvin:

May the Lord grant  
That we may contemplate  
The mysteries of His heavenly wisdom  
With truly increasing devotion,  
To His glory  
And to our edification, Amen.

[This is the prayer Calvin prayed before each exegetical lecture which he gave. Cited in *The piety of John Calvin*, transl. and ed. by Ford Lewis Battles.]

Let's read Romans 9:6-24, 11:33-36. Having read those verses please keep that passage open – we'll be returning there frequently in this session.

### **1. Introducing "predestination"**

#### **(a) Basics**

- **Key words: "predestination" and "election"**

What do these words mean? Election means "choosing" – just as it means "choosing" when we vote in a general election. Predestination is another bible word that means the same thing: choosing – but additionally has a time in mind when the choice was made, namely "pre" or before.

In the bible "election" and "predestination" are always things that GOD does. He chooses. He predestines. He elects. But on what basis does God choose? That's the big question that will concern us now. When WE elect or choose a government we vote on the basis of their past or future performance. But on what basis does God choose people?

Let's get a definition before we go any further:

- **A definition of predestination**

"Before the foundation of the world God chose to save a fixed number of individuals. He chose them purely for his own glory, because of his loving mercy, and not because of their foreknown faith, good works, or perseverance."<sup>1</sup>

That's what we'll be looking to unpack in this session. Before we go on, let me mention a few other introductory points:

#### **(b) Predestination and the sovereignty of God**

Questions about predestination fit into the wider context of the sovereignty of God. Predestination and election are a subset of the bigger issue of the sovereignty of God in all things.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a slightly modified version of Dr. Garry Williams' definition.

God's sovereignty is ability to do whatever he wants. The Bible teaches that God is utterly sovereign – he works out all things in conformity with the purpose of his will (Eph 1:11).

So, if God is sovereign over everything, then we'd expect his sovereignty to extend to who gets saved. There are no holes in the sovereignty of God – praise God!

Or to put it another way: WHO God is (– he is sovereign) must match up with WHAT God does (- save people, sovereignly). If we have a Biblical doctrine of God, then what we say in this course about how God saves will be very familiar.

### **(c) Asking questions about predestination**

It's not wrong to have questions. It's not wrong to find the Bible's teaching hard. And for many of us "predestination" raises a whole bunch of questions...

For some, they're intellectual questions. "But how about THIS, how about THAT." And that's great! Because the Bible does not despise the mind. And whilst there's mystery about the things of God, there is no nonsense or contradiction in the Bible.

For others though, their response to God's sovereignty in salvation is personal and emotional. It is something that is FELT, and felt very deeply. If that's you, or someone you know: please be encouraged by this: there is not a single unrighteousness or unholy or bad thing in any of the deeds of the Lord.

But just a little caution as we kick off: there's a right way and a wrong way to ask questions *about* our Lord and *of* our Lord. We remember that we speak to Him and about him always as small and sinful creatures talking to and about a great and holy God.

I remember an old and wise pastor saying this: Loving the power of God... loving the God who predestines and chooses is actually a mark of growing up in the faith. It's a mark of Christian maturity. And so I hope as we look at the word of God today, that God's Spirit will teach us clearly and – for each of us – grow us up in the faith.

A final introductory word...

### **(e) Predestination in church history: Calvinism vs. Arminianism**

You may know that the areas we're touching on today have figured large in church history, particularly over the last 400 years. We're touching on one of the issues at the heart of the dispute between Calvinism and Arminianism.

We've not time to go into the story right now. But if you want the conclusion in a sentence: "Calvinism = Good! Arminianism = Bad!"

That's slightly cheeky a conclusion to draw. And of course we don't want to follow any human individual or party – we want to go wherever the Bible leads us. However, it's impossible to engage with the topic of God's sovereignty in salvation without touching on this historical debate. It's also profitable to engage with it, as the wisdom of our fathers in the faith, as they are often full of wisdom and truth. Also, it is necessary for a church to decide in which stream of historical theology it is located.

We are all by nature Arminians. However, it is our belief that a Calvinist outlook more faithfully reflects the teaching of Scripture.

So here's a brief historical sketch...

Journey back 400 years. To start with, I want you to meet my friend John Calvin. He was born in France in 1509. He was converted out of Roman Catholicism. He fled from Paris aged 25 under Catholic persecution. He spent most of the rest of his life in the city of Geneva, where he served as a theologian, preacher and pastor. His writings are some of the purest and best theology ever produced – particularly a great systematic theology called the “Institutes of the Christian Religion.” He is rightly regarded as the fountain of “Reformed” theology, or Calvinistic theology.

At the heart of Calvin’s writings is the greatness and majesty of God. Calvin dethrones man, and allows God to be God. There is much, much more to Calvin than just predestination. But it is fair to say that God’s sovereignty is rightly a big deal in his writing.

A generation later, Jacob Arminius came along. He rejected Calvinism. He rejected the total sovereignty of God in all things. Specifically he thought that men had greater power against sin than Calvin taught – and (we would say) than the Bible taught.

It wasn’t until after his death that Arminianism as a movement got going. But its effects continue to this day. So, John Wesley the founder of Methodism (and a wonderful evangelist) was a committed Arminian. So too was Methodism, the movement which Wesley founded. Arminianism is predominant in the Protestant church worldwide.

We’re going to see today that Calvinism is consistent with the Bible whereas Arminianism is not.

We’re not interested vastly in historical stuff just for its own sake. But we do need to understand the church world in which we live – which is hugely shaped by the past.

And especially if you’re a leader in a church in any way you need to understand this subject with reasonable depth. For example, you ought to understand the doctrinal summary which often goes by the acronym TULIP. (We’ve not got time to go into it today).

By the early 1600s Arminianism was causing a real problem in the church. In 1610 some Arminians published a 5 point manifesto denying the Bible’s teaching on God’s sovereignty and salvation. And so the government of the Netherlands called a conference or a synod – at Dordt or Dordrecht. The men who met there answered the five points. Their summary of the Bible’s teaching is known today as the “Five Points of Calvinism”. Calvin was long dead when they were published. But they summarise his teaching – and most importantly the Bible’s teaching.<sup>2</sup>

What were those Five Points? When we think of Holland we think of tulips! In God’s strange providence, the 5 points of Calvinism – in English – answer to the acronym TULIP.

T = total depravity

U = unconditional election

L = limited atonement

I = irresistible grace

P = perseverance of the saints.

“TULIP” is really helpful:

- it summarises key bits of the doctrine of salvation

---

<sup>2</sup> The Decision of the Synod of Dordt on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands is popularly known as the Canons of Dordt. It consists of statements of doctrine adopted by the great Synod of Dordt which met in the city of Dordrecht in 1618-19. Although this was a national synod of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, it had an international character, since it was composed not only of Dutch delegates but also of twenty-six delegates from eight foreign countries. See online at [reformed.org](http://reformed.org)

- it's easy to remember: why not try learning it!
- and it shows the logic of the gospel: each step builds on the one before...

See the logic:

1. - we are unable to save ourselves: totally depraved
2. - therefore God chooses us unconditionally: not because we are good, not because we choose him. (We'll see that in a minute.)
3. - if God is free to save whom He will, then it is for those that Christ died on the Cross.
4. - if Christ died for them, then the Spirit will irresistibly call them to faith.
5. - if salvation is God's work at the beginning and in its application, then it will certainly be so at the end.

## **2. Predestination explained**

Remember our definition. We're going to unpack the definition given above now:

### **(a) Before the foundation of the world God chose**

The simple point we're making here is this: it is GOD who chose. He is the subject. He does the choosing.

- Ephesians 1:3-5,

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will..."

Notice in Eph 1: God does the choosing. And God is praised for his choosing – so it must be his work. Otherwise, praise is due to me!

- John 6:37-39,

"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day."

See in Jn 6: the Father gives Christians to the Son. We're a gift from Father to Son. If WE are responsible for being in Christ, then we're not a gift from Father to Son. And the Father's love for the Son is lessened, and glory must go to us.

- Lastly a doctrinal point:

Total inability requires that GOD chose if any are to be saved. For there could be NO faithful response for God to fore-know. This is really key: if total depravity is true then salvation must be down to the free choice of God.

### **(b) God chose a fixed number of individuals**

Does God choose a people but not specify the identity of the members of that group? (= corporate election, taught by Barth.). No. God chooses individuals

- If God is sovereign, then of course election must be individual. Otherwise individual Christians would be responsible for their own salvation.<sup>3</sup>
- Scripture speaks of the election of specific individuals in many different places.<sup>4</sup>

For example:

<sup>3</sup> Plus, corporate election is illogical in that you cannot have a body or society unless it has members.

<sup>4</sup> See also Acts 13:48,

- in our reading from Romans 9 we met Jacob, Esau. Real children of Rebecca who were distinguished by God before their birth.
- we also meet Pharaoh a real man, who is contrasted with “those on whom God has mercy. Real individuals.
- in Romans 11:4-5 we read of Elijah’s day when God reserved “7,000 people” for himself.
- in Revelation we meet the lamb’s book of life. A book in which “names” are written. (Rev 13:8, 20:11-15, 21:27. Also see 6:11).

### **(c) God chose some for salvation**

When he sets his electing love upon someone, it’s for the purpose of salvation. We can put it like this: “Those to whom God applies the blessings of salvation IN TIME, are those whom he has chosen BEFORE time.”

Listen to God’s word from some texts we’ve already dipped into:

- Romans 9:23 teaches that the elect are “prepared in advance for glory.”
- Eph 1:5, “he predestined us to be adopted as his sons.”

How about 2 Thessalonians 2:13

- “But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”

Or how about Acts 13:48. Paul and Barnabas are preaching the gospel, and some gentiles become Christians. See how it’s described:

Acts 13:48, “When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.”

Those gentiles become Xns. They receive eternal life. Why? Because they were “appointed” – they did not appoint themselves. God had decided before time that on that day they would hear and believe the Gospel.

### **(d) God purposes not to save others**

But in a universe where God is sovereign, we’d also expect to find the opposite. God elects to life and salvation. He also eternally purposes “**reprobation.**” This is an awesome truth, where we see the depth of the Godness of God.

“Reprobation” speaks of God’s eternal decision concerning those sinners whom he has not chosen for life. It is a decision not to change them. But to leave them to sin as they already want to. Giving them over to their sins. And finally judging them.

Here are some relevant scriptures:

- Romans 9:22, speaks of those whom God has “prepared for destruction.”
- 1 Peter 2:8, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message-- which is also what they were destined for.”
- Proverbs 16:4, “The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster.”

Other texts include John 6:64-65, 12:40, Romans 1:24, 11:7-8, Mark 4:12, Deut 2:30, Acts 2:23, 4:27-28, Luke 22:22.

The Bible does teach that judgement is God’s “alien” or strange work (Isaiah 28:21). It teaches that he shows love and grace to a thousand generations and judgement to the third and fourth (Exodus 34). We

view God's work in reprobation and salvation asymmetrically (which is why to speak of "double predestination" is probably unhelpful).<sup>5</sup>

At one level reprobation doesn't effect Christians at all. Why? Because we don't know who is reprobate: "We should view all persons that we meet as possibly being numbered among the elect." (J.I. Packer).

However, the Lord is 100% sovereign over those who reject the gospel. He is sovereign over unbelief (which should encourage us when the gospel is rejected – the Lord is never outwitted or taken by surprise).

### (e) God chose for his own glory

Question: Why does God choose? Answer: he does it for his own glory.

The human mind finds this repugnant: after all the essence of sin is me acting for my own glory... plus we don't like the thought even of God glorifying himself.

But it is right to glorify him because of his excellence. A God who does not seek his own glory as the highest end is doing evil.<sup>6</sup> Thus we read:

- Eph 1:5-6, "he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **to the praise of his glorious grace**, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

### (f) God chose because of his loving mercy, not because of anything in us.

This is the heart of the dispute between Calvinism and Arminianism.

Arminians do believe in election. But they believe that God chooses those he knows will believe.

Calvinism: election → faith
VS.
Arminianism: foreseen faith → election

The Bible does not teach that.

The point we're specifically making here is this:

- God did not look into the future and see our faith in him, and respond by electing.
- God did not look into the future and see anything in us at all that obliged him to choose us.

In other words, God's choosing is unconditional. He didn't have to elect ANYONE. (This is the "U" of TULIP: unconditional election.)

Put **positively** God chooses simply because of mercy. So...

- Romans 9:15, "For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy."

Put **negatively** God does not choose because of anything in us. Here are some arguments demonstrating that:

- (i) the bondage of the will means that no-one can believe the Gospel on their own.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In Ezek 33:11 we read that the Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. At the same time, though, we read in Deut 28:63 that he will delight in destroying Israel.

<sup>6</sup> "... if God has respect to things according to their nature and proportions, he must necessarily have the greatest respect to himself. It would be against the perfection of his nature, his wisdom, holiness and perfect rectitude whereby he is disposed to do everything that is fit to be done, to suppose otherwise." From Jonathan Edward's *Dissertation on the End to which God Created The World*.

- (ii) scripture excludes human reasons: God doesn't choose because his people are numerous, wise, influential or of noble birth. (Deut 7:7-8, 1 Cor 1:26-31).
- (iii) scripture excludes human boasting (Eph 2:9, 2 Tim 1:9): it's God's work.
- (iv) Arminianism makes man's choice and works determinative: what's the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? According to Arminians it is *something in us* – not in God. That flies in the face of (ii) and (iii)
- (v) specific election texts are emptied of their meaning
- (vi) election causes holiness, not the other way round. Eph 1:4, "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight." Notice what Paul's saying here:  
 Yes: Election → holiness  
 No: Holiness → election

Here's a helpful quote from J.I. Packer to summarise:

"This divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace, for it is unconstrained and unconditional, not merited by anything in those who are its subjects. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation; so it is a wonder, and matter for endless praise, that he should choose to save any of us; and doubly so when his choice involved the giving of his own Son to suffer as sin-bearer for the elect (Romans 8:32)." (Concise Theology, p149).

Before going on here's a question: **What about God's "foreknowledge" in Romans 8:29-30**

In your Bibles have a look at these verses. Sometimes this is said to mean passive foresight on God's part of what individuals are going to do, without his predetermining their action.

Logically it couldn't mean that: since we're all dead in sin, no-one who hears the Gospel will come to faith without God moving them.

But even more importantly that's not what "foreknowledge" means in the Bible. "Knowledge" in the Bible has to do with personal relationships.<sup>8</sup>

- Eg. Gen 4:1, "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain". Knowing does not mean "intellectual knowledge", it means "personal relationship."
- Eg. Gen 18:19 "I have chosen him" is literally "I have known him."

And God's "foreknowledge" is simply God's determination of a personal relationship in advance: - "those whom God has determined to know and love" is what it means. Another example of this would be the prophet Jeremiah, of the Lord says in Jer 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I KNEW you..."

So in Romans it's talking about knowing people, not about knowing decisions.<sup>9</sup>

It's just another way of saying "predestine." (But perhaps with added personal connotations.)

---

<sup>7</sup> Classical Arminians believe in "universal prevenient grace": although bound in sin, God liberates all people such that they can freely choose to believe or reject the Gospel. There is no Scriptural basis for this belief.

<sup>8</sup> Note: the Greek verb *ginosko* is the key verb in Romans 8:29-30. In the LXX it translates the Hebrew verb "to know" (*yada*), establishing a useful link.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Moo, *Romans*, p532: "Paul does not say that God knew anything *about* us but that he knew *us*."

### **3. Answering questions**

#### **(a) How is it fair?**

Look at Romans 9:14-18. How does the apostle Paul answer the question of fairness here? God is God and we are not.

Because God is God, he is free to have mercy on anyone he wants. And he's also free to not have mercy on anyone he wants. Or as v18 puts it he's free to harden whoever he wants – i.e. to stop them believing in Jesus.

To illustrate what he means Paul looks back to the Exodus from Egypt and to Pharaoh, the King of Egypt who would not let God's people go. Time and time again Pharaoh rejected the word of God, spoken by Moses. And the book of Exodus tells us it was because he had a hard heart...

But it also tells us – and Paul confirms it here – that the reason for his hard heart was that God had hardened it. [Ex 4:21] Before Moses even said a word to Pharaoh, God had promised that he would make it so that Pharaoh would reject the word of God and refuse to let Israel go. And that's fair, says Paul, because God as God can have mercy on whoever he chooses.

Actually, the truth is: we all deserve to go to hell with Pharaoh. The amazing thing is not that some are condemned, but that any are saved.

#### **(b) Don't we have free will? Doesn't predestination make us robots?**

I hope you know by now that we do NOT have free will. Totally depraved people who are bound in sin are NOT free. We are not able to do good or choose Christ on our own.

But this does not mean that the unregenerate person who is bound in sin is a robot. Why not? Because they *enjoy* sin.... they *choose* sin, even if they cannot choose the opposite. (Remember John 8:34, 44? We looked at it in session one: unbelievers are slaves to sin, yet it is their "will" to follow Satan's ways). The unbeliever is not able to choose to follow Christ, but they do choose to go the other way.

And what about the regenerate person? Are THEY robots when they turn to Christ and follow him? Not a bit of it! One of the beauties of salvation is that God takes bound wills and frees them, and causes us willingly to choose Christ. We'll think in coming weeks about God's work and our involvement in the application of salvation.

#### **(c) What about those who appear to stop being Christians?**

We all know the tragic phenomenon of those who seem to start the Christian life only to give up. Were they really elected? If so, can they really fall away?

Later on we're going to think specifically about the issue of perseverance in the Christian life – the issue of staying saved. To cut a long story short:

- the Bible DOES teach "once saved always saved."
- we don't know what's going on in other people's hearts
- we don't whether someone was a fake Christian, who was never elected... or whether they were are a real Christian who's going through a long period of serious sin and backsliding.
- We don't know... and the key thing for us and for that person is "am I trusting Christ today?"

#### **(d) Why does God chose A and not B?**

We do not know, because God does not tell us. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us that "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law." The Bible reveals all we NEED to know. But not all we would like to know – it doesn't satisfy our curiosity about everything.

#### **4. Applying the doctrine of predestination**

Predestination runs through the Scriptures like a bed-rock. Sometimes it's largely hidden. Sometimes it pokes its head well above the surface. From throughout the Scriptures these are the kinds of applications God would have us draw from the truth of predestination:

*Group discussion:*

Read through each of the texts listed below. In each case what is God's predestining work meant to "do" to us? (What is its application?)

##### **(a) It gives hope to the evangelist**

We don't know who is among the elect. So we preach promiscuously

- Acts 18:9-10, "One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. <sup>10</sup> For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."

There are many chosen people in this town. So he doesn't leave. Rather he stays put and preaches the word to them. God's people are out there... so talk about Jesus.

##### **(b) It's a basis of godly living**

Here's a childish illustration: if you're chosen for the cricket team, you'd not go out and buy a football kit. Ridiculous and inappropriate. That's how ridiculous it is for God's chosen people to live in an ungodly way.

- Colossians 3:12, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

I am chosen. So I'm to live like I'm chosen.

##### **(c) We are humbled and encouraged**

Election gives us a right perspective. It teaches me that GOD IS GOD AND I AM NOT. Naturally, I want to earn and perform and achieve. But God's election – like every work of grace – attacks this. Predestination shows that salvation has nothing to do with me – it is all of God. Naturally, I imagine I have free will. But slavery to sin means I don't. Salvation must be all of God. God must elect – or I must be damned.<sup>10</sup>

- Romans 9:20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"

But I am also deeply comforted:

- John 6:37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."

##### **(d) God is exalted**

Above all we are moved to praise and worship God:

- Eph 1:3, "Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

---

<sup>10</sup> The doctrine corrects how I think about my conversion. It's natural to think "I chose to become a Christian – it was my decision." But the illustration from Pilgrims Progress is true. At the time of conversion I walked through the door labelled "I chose God." But now with Scripture informing my mind I look back and see over the door "God chose me."

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

R.C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*

### **A HYMN BY A.M. TOPLADY ON GOD'S SOVEREIGN LOVE**

How vast the benefits divine  
which we in Christ possess!  
We are redeemed from sin and shame  
and called to holiness.  
Not for the works that we have done-  
all these to him are owed;  
but he of his electing love  
salvation has bestowed.

To you alone, O Lord, is due  
all glory and renown:  
praise to ourselves we dare not take,  
or rob you of your crown.  
You were yourself our guarantor  
in God's redemption plan;  
in you his grace was given us  
before the world began.

Safe in the arms of sovereign love  
we ever shall remain;  
not all the rage of earth or hell  
can make your promise vain.  
So none of all your chosen ones  
shall fail your heaven to gain;  
here they will share abounding grace,  
and there with Jesus reign.

[Augustus M Toplady 1740-78 and Dewey Westra 1899-1979](#) / Praise! No. 711

---

### **Postscript: How do we teach predestination?**

Those of us involved in Bible teaching won't want to bang on about it the whole time. But we're not to be ashamed of it. It's like a bedrock that runs under the whole of Scripture: sometimes largely invisible, but sometimes sticking well above the surface.

So, yes, we do teach and talk about predestination. But how?

We teach it to God's people for all the reasons given above: to humble us, move us to holiness, move us to praise and worship. See above.

But Jesus goes further and even deploys it evangelistically! This shows that preaching predestination can't hinder the call which is itself grounded on election:

- Matt 11:25-30, but issues general call to "come" in v28 and v7 suggests a public context
- Jn 6:35-44 speaks of election and preservation to non-Xns (see vv24-25, 64-66)

## **Appendix: Some bible texts on predestination / election – both re: salvation and reprobation**

**Romans 9:10-24** Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. <sup>11</sup> Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad-- in order that God's purpose in election might stand: <sup>12</sup> not by works but by him who calls-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." <sup>14</sup> What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. <sup>19</sup> One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" <sup>21</sup> Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory-- <sup>24</sup> even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

**Romans 11:1-10** I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah-- how he appealed to God against Israel: <sup>3</sup> "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? <sup>4</sup> And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." <sup>5</sup> So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. <sup>6</sup> And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. <sup>7</sup> What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, <sup>8</sup> as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." <sup>9</sup> And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them." <sup>10</sup> May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."

**Romans 11:33-36** Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup> "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" <sup>35</sup> "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

**John 6:37-44** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." <sup>41</sup> At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" <sup>43</sup> "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. <sup>44</sup> "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

**John 6:65** He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

**John 13:18** "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'

**John 15:16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-- fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

**John 17:9** I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

**Acts 13:48** When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

**Ephesians 1:3-5** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--

**1 Thessalonians 1:4** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup> because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

**1 Thessalonians 5:9** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Thessalonians 2:13** But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Deut 7:7-8 <sup>7</sup> It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31** Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

**Romans 9:11** Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad-- in order that God's purpose in election might stand: <sup>12</sup> not by works but by him who calls-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

**1 Peter 2:8** and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message-- which is also what they were destined for.

**Proverbs 16:4** The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster.