

## What Does Romans 9 Really Mean?

(July 19, 2024)

How can God be sovereign and human beings be free? Doesn't God elect just some to salvation and not others? If God predestines us, do we really have free choice? And doesn't God love some people but not others? After all, in Romans chapter nine, it says this. God says, Jacob, I love, but Esau I hated. This is a question that was sent in by John about Romans 9. And because of passages like this, in fact, let me read a little bit more of Romans 9, and then we'll get into it.

God says, Jacob, I love, but Esau I hated. What shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all, Paul says. For he says to Moses, God says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. It does not therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the scripture says to Pharaoh, I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you, that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. Therefore, God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden.

Now, because of passages like this, some Christians claim that we don't have free will, at least not the free will to choose God. According to them, God does all the choosing. Now, this is a theological viewpoint you probably know is known as Calvinism. And there are different varieties of Calvinism, but the extreme or hyper Calvinistic viewpoint essentially says, we don't have free will. God must regenerate us before we can believe. And this is one of the passages that Calvinists turn to.

The problem is elsewhere in the Bible, it says that God doesn't want anybody to be lost. And, you know, if God does all the choosing, why doesn't He just choose everyone to believe? For example, in Ezekiel 18, it says, for I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord. Repent and live. First Timothy 2:3-4 says, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Second Peter 3:9 says, the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all to come to



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repentance. So, if God does all the choosing, and yet He wants all to be saved, why are some not saved? Now, the passages I just read, particularly from Ezekiel 1 Timothy, 2 Peter, these passages seem clear. But what about Romans 9? That seems pretty clear, too. How do we deal with what appears to be a discrepancy or maybe even a contradiction?

Well, whenever you look at a passage, ladies and gentlemen, you always have to stop and discover what is going on. And this is from our online course we, we have called 'How to Interpret Your Bible.' We have this acronym, S.T.O.P. S.T.O.P. And this will help you exegete, in other words, discover what the real true meaning is of any passage. Probably 90% of what you need to know, you'll know if you go through this S.T.O.P. acronym.

Now, the 'S' stands for the situation. In other words, when you're looking at a passage of scripture, what's the situation? What's going on here? Who is this written to? What kind of document is this? In fact, that's what the 'T' is in stop. It's type, type of literature. Is this law? Is this poetry? Is this prophecy? Is this a parable? Is this an epistle, a letter to a church? Is it a gospel? I mean, what is it? Because that'll help you discover how to interpret it properly, what it really means.

So, you've got the situation, that's the 'S', what's the context? What's going on? You got the 'T', that's the type, type of literature, because you're going to interpret poetry then, different than you're going to say interpret law, right? You got the 'O'. The 'O' stands for who's the object of the passage. Is the object of the passage, say, ancient Israel? Is it a New Testament church? Is it just some individual, say, in the church at Rome, like for example, in Romans 16:13, Paul says, greet Rufus.

Well, is that a command for us, or is that a command for the people in Rome to whom he's writing the letter? He wants them to greet Rufus, not you. But it just helps you figure out what's going on. Is this a command for you, or who is this written to? That's the 'O'. The p in S.T.O.P stands for prescription. In other words, is this passage a prescription or just a description? You might be surprised to learn that most of the Bible is, or at least a majority of the Bible is just a description. It's just telling you what, what happened.

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It's not a prescription. For example, the Bible tells you about David's adultery. That's a description. It's not a prescription. He doesn't want us to commit adultery. He's just telling us what happened. So, if you go through this acronym for, say, the book of Romans, it will help you discover what Paul means in Romans chapter nine. Let's start with the s. What's the situation? What's the context?

First of all, Romans is probably the most theologically rich book in the entire Bible. It is Paul's and theological treatise to the largest city in the world at the time, Rome. Rome probably had about a million people at the time. And he's writing to Rome. He hadn't been there yet, but he's writing to believers in Rome. By the way, this also shows he's probably writing around, say, 57 AD or so, how quickly Christianity spread. I mean, this is just 25 years after Jesus rises from the dead. You already got a church in Rome and Paul is writing to this church. And what's the outline of the Book of Romans?

Well, the outline of the Book of Romans from 30,000ft is he does an introduction where he points out what the essentials of the faith are in Romans chapter one. The first, say, 16 verses after some initial greetings. Then for the next couple of chapters, he talks about condemnation, how everybody's condemned, and that starts in Romans 1:18. Then he starts talking about justification, and that begins about Romans 3:20. I'm doing this from memory, but this is when Paul says, after he points out that everybody's fallen, not one is good.

We're all sinners, he says. But now there's a righteousness that comes by faith, it comes through Jesus. And that begins in Romans 3:20. Then he starts talking about sanctification. After you have accepted Jesus, how do you become more and more like Jesus? That begins around Romans chapter six. Then about halfway through Romans chapter eight, he starts talking about glorification. What's going to happen when we're ultimately glorified? When we get to heaven and see God for who he is, what is that going to be like? And that is through Romans chapter eight.

Now, when you read the end of Romans chapter eight, this might be the peak of the Bible. Here's the last few verses of Romans chapter eight. He says, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height

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nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. The next verse should be therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. That would have made perfect sense.

But I just read Romans chapter twelve, verse one. It would have made perfect sense to go from the last verse in chapter eight, that nothing's going to be able to separate us from the love of God, to therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices. He doesn't do that. Why? Because he's got a skeptic planted in the middle of the book that says, Paul, if you're saying Jesus is so great, why don't your own people believe in Him?

And so, what he does, Paul does is he takes a three chapter detour about Israel in Romans chapter nine, Romans chapter ten and Romans chapter eleven. And when we come back, we'll talk about that detour and what Romans nine actually means. Don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio network. Back in two minutes.

We're predestined to. Ladies and gentlemen, you've been predestined to freely listen to this podcast. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio network. We're talking about Romans chapter nine. What does it mean? Many Calvinists will say, you don't have a choice and God hardens people, and who are you to talk back to God and all this. Does this mean we don't have free will? We're getting into it today here on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

Now, before the break we were talking about the outline of Romans from 30,000ft. And we said it would have made perfect sense from Paul to go from these amazing, rousing, almost motivational statements at the end of Romans chapter eight to the application part of the book. Romans chapter twelve, therefore present your bodies as living sacrifices. But he doesn't do that.

He takes three chapters to detour to talk about Israel because the people in Rome are probably thinking, Paul, if you're saying this is so great that Christianity is true and this is the way to

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eternal life and all this, how come your own people don't believe so? In Romans chapter nine, Paul talks about Israel's past. In Romans chapter ten he talks about Israel's present. And in Romans chapter eleven, he talks about Israel's future. Then when you get to Romans chapter twelve, you see the word, therefore. And whenever you're interpreting the Bible, you always have to, when you see the word therefore, ask yourself, what's that word there for?

The word is there to show you that there's application coming. Essentially, the first eleven chapters of Romans are mostly theology. Then when you hit Romans chapter twelve, it's all application. Romans chapter twelve is our duty to God. Romans chapter 13 is our duty to government. Romans chapter 14 and following is our duty to one another in light of all this.

So, now let's go back to Romans chapter nine. Here's what he says right after that rousing nothing can separate us from the love of God. He says, I speak the truth in Christ. I'm not lying. My conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit. I have great sorrow and unseeking anguish in my heart, for I wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. He goes on to say, it's not as though God's word had failed. And then He starts talking about Abraham and Isaac. And he gets to the point in verse ten when he's talking about Isaac.

He says, Isaac had twins. He had Esau and Jacob. And he says, Paul says, yet before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in election might stand not by works, but by Him who calls. She was told, Rebecca, the mother, was told, the older will serve the younger, just as it is written. Jacob, I love, but Esau I hated. All right, let me stop right here. Who is Paul quoting from when he says, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

He's not quoting from Genesis. He's actually quoting from Malachi, or as we say, the Italian prophet Malachi. He's quoting from Malachi, and he's talking about the nations of Israel. I'm sorry, the nations of Israel and Edom. Because Esau, the older brother, became the father of the Edomites the nation of Edom. By the way, later, way later, King Herod, Herod the great was an Edomite. He came from Edom, the line of Esau.

In any event, he's not saying here that he loved one child and hated the other. He's using a Hebrew idiom which points out that God sovereignly selected Israel to be the nation through

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whom He blessed all the other nations. And this is... I mean, Jesus uses the same kind of language. You know, if you don't hate your parents compared to me, you can't follow me. He's not saying literally hate your parents. He's just pointing out the nature of priority here. He's using a hyperbole, a way of saying something, an exaggerated way to make a point.

And then the passage goes on to say that I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and have compassion on whom I have compassion. That's a quote, actually, from Exodus regarding Pharaoh. And then, as we mentioned, it talks about hardening Pharaoh's heart. Hardening Pharaoh's heart. Now, in order for us to understand this, we've got to know, first of all, what kind of election is Paul talking about here? Is Paul talking about the kind of election to salvation? I'm going to prove to you, no. He's not talking about that.

He's actually talking about the election of the nation of Israel, because that is one type of election. He's saying that the election of the nation of Israel is what God has selected here. He chose Jacob, or he chose Israel over Edom and all the other nations to bless the rest of the nations through. And so, this is not talking about the election of individuals to salvation. He's not saying that, say, Pharaoh's necessarily in hell. That's not his point. His point is that God sovereignly chose Israel to bring the messiah to save the whole world.

Now, when you look at this passage, it really helps to know Egyptian religious beliefs and practices, because then you can really catch the significance of this. When Moses first used the word or the phrase hardened Pharaoh's heart, he is actually trading on a belief that the Egyptians had that had to do with the afterlife. You see, in order for someone to make it to the afterlife, they had to have their heart weighed against a feather. And if you look on certain reliefs in Egypt, you can see this.

There is a demon God known as Ammit. Ammit. You can look him up or her up. Actually, this is not a god to be worshiped. Ammit was feared and believed to be a demon rather than a deity because of her role as a devourer of the dead. In other words, if your heart is weighed after you die on a scale against a feather, if your heart was lighter than a feather, then you would be admitted to the afterlife. But if your heart was heavier than a feather, then you wouldn't make it to the afterlife because this demon goddess, Ammit, which was a combination hippo, lion, and crocodile, would eat your heart.

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By the way, those three animals were Nile animals that were the most dangerous to human beings. Lions, crocodiles, and hippopotami. Hippopotamus. In fact, other than a mosquito, the most dangerous animal in the world is a hippopotamus. Hippopotamus. Despite the fact they look cute, they are nasty creatures. And what the Egyptians did is they combine these three terrifying creatures into one demon goddess, Ammit.

And when you go to some of the pyramids or you look at the Egyptian Book of the Dead, you might see this Ammit God at the scale, waiting to devour the heart of the one being judged. And so, when Moses tells Pharaoh that your heart is being hardened, he's essentially saying to Pharaoh, even by your own theology, you're not going to make it, because I'm going to make your heart so hard, it's going to outweigh a feather. Now, what does this show? First of all, it shows that Moses knew the Egyptian culture. It means Moses was there, ladies and gentlemen.

In fact, we're going to go see all this this December because we're going to Egypt and then onto the real Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia this December, from December 2 to the 15th. This is going to be an unbelievable trip. We have an amazing Christian archaeologist from Egypt who's going to go with us, and the lady that organizes all our trips for us. Her name is Rhonda Sand. I just talked to her today.

She's been to Egypt at least 20 times. She said the last time she went, she went with this guy. She took eight pages of notes, and she thought she knew everything about Christianity and Judaism in Egypt. This guy was amazing. He's going to be our guide. And so, if you want to be a part of that, go to [Crossexamined.org](http://Crossexamined.org). Click on events. You will see the Egypt Saudi Arabia trip this December. The weather's going to be perfect at that time, and you're going to want to be a part of this once in a lifetime trip. It's not an inexpensive trip. Why?

Because we stay in the best hotels. When you go on these trips, if you're going to go, do it right and you're going to be tired because it's tiring to see all this stuff. You want to go to a nice place when the evening, you know, when the touring is over. And so, we make this trip kind of a V.I.P. trip, and we only take one bus, so it's going to be a very intimate group. So, I hope you can join us. We're about half full already. If you want to be a part of it, sign up soon. Go to [crossexamine.org](http://crossexamine.org). Click on events. You'll see it there.

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And we might go and actually see this Ammit, God, who is goddess, demon goddess, who actually was going to devour the Pharaoh's heart. Moses was there, ladies and gentlemen. We see a lot of other evidence for Moses being in Egypt, including evidence for the Exodus, we'll see on this trip. Now, here's another thing that's interesting about this, the fact that hearts are hard. Well, I've got to say one other thing about hardening hearts. In the Old Testament, in Exodus, yes, God hardens Pharaoh's heart, but who hardened his heart first? Pharaoh did.

God then just completed the process because he knew he was going to be obstinate against God. And by the way, He knew that Pharaoh would be obstinate against God. This is what Paul says in Romans chapter one, essentially, that if you continue to suppress the truth about God, there's a point where God's going to give you up to your own desire, and He's going to give you up to the point where you not only don't remember, or have any, or don't believe anymore in God and are not only doing evil things, you're cheering on other people who are doing evil.

So, this kind of concept where God gives you up to your own desires is taught in the Old Testament and it's taught in the New Testament. Now, here's the problem, though. For Calvinists, the fact that hearts are hardened contradicts the Calvinist definition of total depravity because they say our hearts are already hardened. I mean, if we are so dead in our trespass and sins that we can't even believe unless God first regenerates us, then everybody is already hardened.

There would be no need for humans to harden even their own hearts or for God to harden their hearts in response, because according to Calvinism, people are already in that state until God regenerates them. No, people aren't born in a state where they can't even believe. They won't believe unless God draws them. We'll get to that later. But God doesn't zap people in order to make them believe. God draws them. And then people make a decision whether or not to believe, and we'll see more reasons why.

This is not talking about the election of people to Hell or even the election of people to heaven, right after the break. We're back in just two minutes. We're predestined to be back, so don't go anywhere. See you then. If you want to be someone who can defend the truth in a post Roe world, defend young, innocent, then tune in to our livestream this coming Monday night at 9:30 p.m. eastern.

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I'll be on with Scott Klusendorf, who is the leader of an online course that we're going to be running in August called 'How to Convince People to be Pro-Life. And we'll also talk about a little bit about what's going on politically in the Republican Party regarding abortion and of course, in the Democrat party as well. And this is going to be an important issue as the election heats up. And we're also going to be talking about other things you can do other than politics to get involved, to help people be pro-life and help women who are in a hard position with unwanted pregnancy.

So, be a part of the livestream this coming Monday night at 9:30 p.m. eastern time on our YouTube channel, the CrossExamined YouTube channel. And if you want to be a part of the course, and I hope you do, go to [Crossexamined.org](http://Crossexamined.org). Click on online courses and look for 'How to Convince People to be Pro-life.' It starts August 5, and I hope you want to be a part of the premium version because you'll be on several occasions with the great Scott Klusendorf, one of the top pro-life teachers in America, for Zoom Q&A's, if you're part of that, if you're part of the premium version.

All right, we're talking today about a question that John wrote in regarding Romans 9. Does this mean we don't have free will? Is God selecting some to heaven and others to hell and all this? And we just got done talking about the fact that the whole hardened heart issue that's both in the Old Testament and the New shows that Moses knew the Egyptian culture, and he is just using that phraseology to point out to Pharaoh that by his own theology, he's not going to make it because his heart is going to outweigh a feather.

Now, you might say, well, Frank, okay, that's all good and interesting, but how do we know this election that's spoken of in Romans chapter nine is not talking about the election of people to salvation? Because if you keep reading... I haven't said this yet, but we say it in the online course, 'How to Interpret Your Bible.' There are no verses in the Bible. There are no verses in the Bible, ladies and gentlemen. I mean, when you think... Do you think when Paul was writing this book of Romans, he said, okay, here's Romans, chapter nine, verse six.

No, the chapter and verse divisions were added about 500 years ago to help us navigate the text, which is important. It'd be really hard to find your way around this big series of books if you didn't have numbers. Right? The problem is we tend to think if it's got a number in front of

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it, we can take it out and make it say whatever we want. We can't do that. That's why we go through the S.T.O.P acronym when we're trying to understand a passage in the Bible. S.T.O.P, if you're just tuning in, go back to this podcast, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist if you're listening in the American Family Radio network. You can hear this show rerun.

I can't go through the S.T.O.P. acronym again, but it helps you figure out what's going on in the text. And so, you just can't read one verse or just a few verses. You've got to keep reading and figure out what's going on. Well, if you keep reading through the book of Romans, when Paul is talking about Israel's past in Romans chapter nine, and then when he gets to Israel or he gets to Romans chapter ten, he's talking about Israel's present.

Well, when he gets to Romans chapter eleven, he's talking about Israel's future. And here's what he says in Romans chapter eleven. Let me start in verse 25. He says, I do not want you, the reader, to be ignorant of this mystery, brother, so that you may not be conceited. Israel has experienced a hardening. There's that word again, a hardening in part, until the full number of Gentiles has come in.

And then he goes to say, and so all Israel will be saved. Then he quotes a passage from the Old Testament. And by the way, theologians argue over what does he mean by all Israel will be saved? Does that mean every person who has Jewish blood will be saved? That doesn't appear to be the case because he's already discounted that in Romans chapter nine. He probably means all true Israel because that's what he says in Romans chapter nine. These are the people that believe by faith. That's true Israel.

Anyway, he goes on to say this. Here's the key verse, verse 28. He says, as far as the Gospel is concerned, they, meaning unbelieving Israel, are enemies on your account. But as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. Now notice, ladies and gentlemen, Paul here is separating the Gospel from election. So, this is obviously not the kind of election where God is electing people to salvation. Because if this was the kind of election where God is electing people to salvation, then how could he separate the Gospel from election?

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Remember, he says, as far as the Gospel is concerned, Israel is enemies. All of Israel collectively are enemies on your account. But as far as the Gospel is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. If they're elected to salvation, how can they be enemies of the Gospel? They can't be. So, this kind of election in Romans 9, 10, and 11 is not electing people to salvation. It's the election of the nation of Israel.

And for those of you that have read Michael Heiser's 'Unseen Realm,' you know that Michael points out that it appears that God had a divine counsel, that He divvied up the nations among. And what happened was at one point these divine beings who were not God, but they were more like angels, these divine beings led these nations astray. And so, God disinherited those nations through about the time of The Tower of Babel, when He separated the people and confused their languages.

And then He began His rescue mission to re-inherit the nations through the nation of Israel, starting with Abraham. That's why in Genesis chapter twelve, Abraham, Abram at that point, is introduced to us because he is the person through whom God is going to bless all the nations, Abraham's nation, the nation of Israel. Then if you fast forward all the way to Pentecost after Jesus has risen from the dead, notice that Pentecost is the reversal of the Tower of Babel, where languages were confused at Babel, people are now able to speak all different languages to communicate with one another at Pentecost.

And Jesus, giving the Great Commission before he ascends to heaven, says, go, therefore, make disciples of all nations. Notice he doesn't say people. He says, make disciples of all nations. God is re-inheriting the nations. So, God elected Israel to be the nation through whom he's going to bless all the nations. And we're now in the process, through evangelism, through discipleship, of re-inheriting the nations. God is using us. That's our job right now. So, that's the big picture from 100,000ft.

And so, this kind of election that you're seeing in Romans 9, 10, and 11 has nothing to do with the election of people to salvation. Now you might say, well, but Frank, some passages seem to teach the election of people to salvation. For example, go to Ephesians 1, where it says, blessed be God the Father. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he who chose us in Him before

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the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the intention of His will.

There it is, Frank, right there. He predestined us even before the foundation of the world. Okay, does this mean, ladies and gentlemen, if this is indeed election to salvation, that we don't have a choice? Well, first of all, let's look at what he said here in verse one. He said, he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Well, how do you get in Christ?

Well, just read a few verses later, verse eleven of Ephesians 1. In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of His glory. And you also were included in Christ when, key word, when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, having believed you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of His glory.

Okay. How did we get in Christ? We believed. And how did we do that? Through faith. In fact, just in the next chapter of Ephesians, for it is by grace you have been saved through God's election and you had no choice. No, it doesn't say that. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not by work, so that no one can boast. By the way, in the Greek here, we know that when he says this is not of yourselves, he's not talking about the faith that God has given you, the faith. He's talking about the salvation, the gift, for it is by grace.

You have been saved through faith. And this just makes sense philosophically and morally. Because if God is going to make all the choices for us, and he wants all of us to be saved, and yet some of us are not saved, then why, if He gives us faith, hasn't He given everyone faith? It would appear to be a contradiction in the scriptures to say God wants all to be saved, but some are not saved, and God does all the saving. So, why isn't everybody saved since God wants everybody to be saved? Why isn't everyone saved?

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Well, the reason everyone isn't saved is because of free will, because we have the ability to make a choice. In fact, I think when you look at in Ephesians 1, the word predestined, you might want to consider using the word guaranteed. What do I mean by that? Well, we're going to get to it right after the break, because this, if we look at it properly, shows not that we don't have a choice, but that our end destiny is predestined. It's guaranteed. You still have a choice, but your destiny is guaranteed. Much more after the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio network. We'll freely come back in just two minutes.

Can God be sovereign and human beings have free will? The answer is yes. Yes, and we're trying to explain why here. We're going through some passages, mostly Romans 9, but we've now touched on Ephesians, chapter one. I want to go back to Romans chapter eight for a second. This is a passage that many people quote, especially when things go wrong. But it's so rich. There's so much going on in here. Romans chapter eight, verse 28 and following says this. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

Let me stop right here for a second. We talk about this when we are dealing with if there's a good God, why is there evil? Notice in this passage, Paul doesn't say all things are good. He says all things work together for good. Anyway, he says, and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined he also called, those he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified.

Okay, does this mean you don't have a choice? No. What this is saying is, despite no matter what difficulty you go through, God is working it for good. And he always foreknew you would believe, and therefore you're guaranteed to be conformed to the likeness or the image of his son, because those he predestined, he called. Those he called, he justified. Those he justified, he also glorified. In other words, once you're in God's hands, you're guaranteed to be glorified. You're predestined to become glorified. It doesn't mean you don't have a choice.

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And we'll talk more about that in a few minutes. But it just means that God's will, God's purpose for those who have chosen to be in Christ will not be thwarted. God will see it through to the end. My friend Leighton Flowers, who probably has the best YouTube channel on this whole issue, and he was a Calvinist and is no longer. And he points out the many problems with Calvinism and the proper interpretation of the Scriptures. He has a YouTube channel called Soteriology 101.

He also did a show with us a little over a year ago that we'll put in the show notes. I will also put in the show notes a recent interview he did with another gentleman that covers many of these issues. And so, you'll have a number of resources to go further with, with Leighton, because he really specializes in this topic. But Dr. Leighton Flowers gave this example about being predestined. He lives near Dallas.

So, he said, imagine if there was this huge storm coming toward Dallas and God sent an angel to the people of Dallas. And he said, I have created a fortress that if you get into this fortress, you will survive the storm. You're guaranteed, you're predestined to survive the storm. If you stay out of this fortress, you're guaranteed you're predestined to be killed. That, he said, is similar to what's going on in this passage. If you decide to get in the fortress, you're predestined to be saved.

If you decide to stay out of the fortress, you're predestined to die. You're predestined to be lost. You're predestined to be overcome by the storm. This is what's going on in this passage. You're the one that makes the choice whether or not you get in the fortress. But once you're in the fortress, God is going to ensure that you're going to be saved, in Paul's words, that you're going to be conformed to the image of his son. You're going to be glorified.

So how do you get in Christ? You believe. You decide to believe. You say, well, what about John chapter six where John chapter six says, in John 6:44, no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them. This is Jesus speaking. And I will raise them up on the last day. See, Calvinists say God has to draw you. Non Calvinists agree with that. We would be disagreeing with this passage if we didn't. But the question is, what does that mean? Does that mean you don't have free will. And who does God draw?

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Well, Leighton unpacks this in a debate he did with James White, who is a Calvinist. We'll put that link in the show notes. But go to John chapter twelve for a second. In John chapter twelve, Jesus said this. This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world. Now, the prince of the world will be driven out. And He says, but I, when I am lifted up. A reference to Him being lifted up on the cross. When I am lifted up and then from the earth, he says, I will draw some men to myself. No, he says, I will draw all men to myself.

Now, Leighton points out some nuances here. John 6:44 is talking about the Father drawing people to Jesus. And John twelve is talking about Jesus drawing the world, all men to Himself. He'll unpack that in the debate. So, I don't have time to get into all those nuances. But the bottom line here is God wants all to be saved. So, he draws all people. And if you decide that you are going to grieve the Holy Spirit, that means that it's your fault you're not in the fortress. It's your fault that you are not saved. It's not because God picked some people and not others.

Now, there's much more on Leighton's website on this and in that debate. But I've got to keep moving here. Let's suppose that this were to mean that God elects some people to salvation. Would that mean that people don't have free will? And the answer is no, you still have free will even if God elects some people to salvation. In fact, if you think about this, it's really unavoidable with God. Why is it unavoidable with God? Because God knows all things.

And so, no matter what universe, God elects to create He's going to know that some people are going to believe, and other people are not going to believe. So, it's unavoidable for God that when He elects to create a universe, He is, in effect, electing some people to salvation. But it is not against their will. It is in accord with their will. Now, you might ask, well, why doesn't God just create a universe where everyone believes? I don't know if I'll get to that in this show, but we're on our way there. Just hold that objection up for a second.

Okay. In a sense, what we're saying here is how can we be elect to salvation and freely elect salvation at the same time? Well, maybe the problem is by saying at the same time. Because, you see, God is not inside of time, God is outside of time. In fact, here's a contradictory statement. Man has free will and man does not have free will. Those two statements are contradictory. Right? But man has free will and God is sovereign is not contradictory. Man can

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have free will, God can have free will, and God can still be sovereign. And that's not contradictory.

You see, there's really no contradiction between predestination and free will. The same act can be ordained by God and still chosen by man. Why? Because we think it's a contradiction for two reasons. First of all, we don't realize that our choice is in time. Or maybe we don't think about this. Our choice is in time, but God's choice is outside of time. We also don't realize that causation. Or let me put it another way, that knowledge does not automatically imply causation. Just because you know what somebody's going to do doesn't mean you're causing Him to do it.

For example, a mother might put her infant down at night to go to sleep, and when she puts that infant down, she knows that at some point during the night, that baby is going to wake up and want to eat. But does that mean that because she knows what that baby's going to do, that she's causing that baby to do that? No. Knowing something's going to happen is not the same as causing it to happen. I mean, I know the sun's going to come up in the east tomorrow. So do you. But that doesn't mean you're causing it to happen. Or maybe another analogy.

Let's suppose that you're a big football fan and there's a bunch of games on one Sunday or one Saturday, if you're a college football fan. And you DVR a bunch of the games because you're not at home. And you want to go home and watch the games because you had to work that day. And on your way home, your friend texts you the scores of the game and you go, man, I did not want to know the scores of the game. I wanted to go home and watch them and not know. You know, let the suspense build. But now I know what's going to happen.

Now, here's my question. So, let's suppose you go home, and you elect to watch, I don't know, the, the Giants against the Cowboys, and you elect to watch that game and you already know the score because your friend texted it to you. Because you know the score and because you know what the players are going to do on the field, does that mean that those players that you're watching didn't have free will when they actually played the game?

No, those players freely did what they did, even though later on you knew what they did. And that's similar, although not perfectly analogous to us. God is outside of time. He knows what

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we're going to do before we do it, but that doesn't mean he's causing us to do it. If we were to do something else, he would have known that. If we were to freely choose, say, not to believe in Jesus, he would have known that. If we freely choose to believe in Jesus, He freely knows that.

Now, there's much more that we need to talk about on this issue. I haven't gotten to all the well, what ifs and what about this? And what about that? And why didn't God just create a universe where everyone believed? And we're going to get to it in the Midweek podcast. If you're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an atheist on the American Family Radio network, you're not going to hear it on AFR. Look for the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast this Tuesday, and we'll complete our discussion about predestination and free will. You are predestined to be there. See you then.

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