

Chosen People 3

Calvinism & Arminianism

Romans 9:25-10:13

Memory Verses: Romans 10:1

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

We are in a series called Chosen People, walking through Romans 9-11. And at the heart of this series a couple of questions. First, who, if any, are chosen. And Two, if any are chosen, can God be trusted with that choice?

The chosen people of Israel had received God's promises, and yet ultimately rejected God's Messiah. So Paul asks, has God's plan failed? And Paul answers, by no means. Why? Because God's plan is not contingent on man's choices. God has a plan and elects to use individuals to implement that plan, but if they fail to implement it the way he has designed or predestined, then he will find another way. We see this in the example of Esther in **Esther 4:14** where Mordecai reminds the Queen... "for if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this." **God has a predestined plan, and has elected to use many of us for that plan, but if we aren't obedient, he will find another way.** God's plans don't fail!

Which brings us to where we were last week. Is God fair if he elects to use some of us and not others. Is it fair that God chose to use Isaac and not Ishmael? Is it fair that God chose to use Jacob and not Ismael? Is it fair that God chose to use Moses and Pharaoh and not say... Bob the Hebrew? And as we saw last week, our understanding of God's fairness is determined by our understanding of mercy, sovereignty, and predestination. Ultimately, God is never unjust, because election is always an act of mercy.

Which brings us to where we are today... and leads us to the inevitable dilemma... what about when election intersects with our free will! What about my salvation? Do I choose God or does he choose me? And when it all boils down it people generally land in one of two camps, Calvinism or Arminianism. Election or Free Will. God's choice or our choice!

You may say, well isn't that a theological argument reserved for seminary or Bible College? And you may be partially correct. It is possible that many laypeople in the church have not chosen one of these camps nor are they aware of the nuances and details of each. And it is not my purpose today to have you choose one of these. But I do feel it is

important that we know what scripture says about these issues and how greater men have tried to handle them.

Today's goal isn't for you to become a better follower of John Calvin or Jacob Arminius... Today's goal is for you to become a better follower of Jesus Christ by trusting in Him more dearly! The main point this morning is simple... **Everyone who calls is saved, and everyone who is saved is called.** Today we are going to examine these two systems of theology and pray that the Holy Spirit and the scriptures will help us to come to a conclusion that draws us closer to Jesus.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first theological system we will look at is Calvinism. And what we see is that **With Calvinism God Is Sovereign And Chooses**. Look with me at **Romans 9:25-29**. Calvinism comes from the teachings of a French Pastor from the 1500s named John Calvin. As a reformer, Calvin was instrumental in calling the Catholic church to return to the authority of scripture and the Gospel of grace. Over time, his teachings became summarized into what many know as the Five Points of Calvinism which can be remembered from the acronym TULIP.

TULIP stands for; Total Depravity; humanity is too corrupted to seek God on their own. **Romans 3:10-11**, No one seeks God. Unconditional Election; God's choice to save is not based on anything he foresaw in us, **Ephesians 1:4-5**. Limited Atonement; Christ died specifically for the elect., **Matthew 1:21**. Irresistible Grace; Those who Christ draws cannot resist Him, **John 6:37**. Perseverance of the Saints; Those who are truly saved cannot lose their salvation, **John 10:28-29**.

One thing is clear as you look at these tenets of Calvinism... Calvin was not trying to come up with something new. Rather, he was trying to preserve the Biblical truth that God is sovereign in salvation. God is totally in control and if he wanted to he could cause anything to happen. God is all powerful, omnipotent, and all knowing, omniscient. He knows who will be saved and he works that they will be saved. God must draw men to himself or men would never come to him in their sinfulness. Thus, to a degree, we all must agree that God is sovereign over salvation and elects and chooses those who will be saved.

And Romans 9 gives us a lot to work with where this concerned. Look again at **vs.25-29**. Those who were not my people, I will call my people. They will be called. A remnant will be saved. If the Lord had not... Who is acting? God. Who is initiating? God. Who is calling? God. Who is saving? God. Who is preserving? God.

Calvinism is clearly right about some things as we see here. We are depraved. Nobody saves themselves. Nobody earns salvation. Salvation begins with God. We are unconditionally saved. There is nothing good in us that God should save us. We were not his people. **The Bible presents**

salvation as a work of divine grace from beginning to end. **Everyone who calls is saved, and everyone who is saved is called.**

The second theological system we will look at is called Arminianism. And what we see is that **With Arminianism Free Will Allows Us To Choose**. Look with me at **Romans 9:30-10:13**. Arminianism comes from the teachings of a Dutch Theologian named Jacob Arminius. Jacob began his ministry as a Calvinist, but was deemed heretical because of a few minor issues he wanted to address. Namely, though God was sovereign, the Bible clearly taught that Christ's atonement was for all and that all humans had a responsibility to choose to place their faith in Christ. God is in control, but we also have a free will to either accept or resist Christ's free gift of salvation.

This passage also clearly teaches this. God saved a people who were not his people; the Gentiles. But how were they saved? Through faith! Why did Israel stumble? Because they chose to not have faith! Why did Israel fail to accept the Messiah? It wasn't because God didn't give them the opportunity... Christ came first to the Jews. It wasn't for a lack of grace or love on God's part... he gave up his own son for them. It was simply because they, of their own free will, choose to reject him. They freely chose to resist his grace. And in chapter 10 it becomes personal. We will either be saved or not based on what... If we confess, if we believe. For everyone who believes... for everyone who calls... will be saved! It is our free will choice whether or not to accept the unconditional election or calling of Christ!

At least two things are extremely clear from this passage. First, Calvin's limited atonement isn't limited by God's grace but by those who choose to accept him. The most hard core Calvinist will argue that God has chosen those who will be saved and those who will not and because of this... Christ only died for those who will be saved. But we don't see that here do we? We see in **Romans 10:11**... everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. We see in **vs.12** that Jesus is the same Lord of us all... Jew and Gentile, saved and not saved. And then the kicker... **vs.13**... everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Jesus died for all.. and all have the opportunity to choose to be saved. The offer for salvation isn't limited... it is universal. Christ's atonement is sufficient for everyone. **John 3:16, 1 John 2:2, 2 Peter 3:9. The gospel invitation is only good news for all mankind if all mankind are genuinely invited.**

There is no limited atonement on God's part. But there is on ours. If we choose to reject Christ. We will not be saved. Not because Jesus didn't make a way for atonement... but because we chose not to be atoned. Secondly we see here that Calvin's Irresistible Grace isn't irresistible in the sense that it can't be rejected... but in the sense that it is

absolutely necessary and compelling. It is extremely sad and disappointing when someone rejects God's grace, but it is a reality... God's grace can be resisted. **Romans 10:3**, Israel refused God's righteousness. And **10:21** is the kicker... God is saying, "all day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." God is reaching out, inviting, calling, pleading, at times crying... and yet the people still resist him. **Matthew 23:37, Acts 7:51** show that not only is it possible.. it is pandemic. We often resist the grace of Christ.

Still, without God's grace we would never come to him. Look at **10:12** again. Jesus loves us without partiality and is pouring out his riches and grace all over us! And this leads us to (**vs13**) call on the name of the Lord. **Romans 2:4, Joel 2:13**. One could say that his grace is irresistible for those who choose to not resist it. Regardless, at the end of chapter 9 it is clear that God is the one responsible for our salvation and the beginning of chapter 10 makes it clear that we are the ones responsible for our salvation! **Everyone who calls is saved, and everyone who is saved is called.**

Application

So what do we do? Calvinism, taken at a moderate level seems reliable and Arminianism, taken at a moderate level makes sense. That is why I present a balanced approach; The Biblical Truth. And **The Biblical Truth Says We are Chosen And Free**. Calvinism taken to the extreme strips mankind of free will and the ability to make choices and take responsibility. This is not biblical. Arminianism taken to the extreme strips God of his sovereignty and makes salvation works based. This is also not biblical. But taken as the original theologians designed it, a moderate balanced view makes a resolution from a complex issues. God calls, people believe. God chooses, people respond. God initiates, people are responsible. God saves, people trust. Paul never sees a contradiction here. Only modern Christians think every mystery must fit inside a neat little box. But **God only has one box that it all must fit in... faith!** Again look at (**9:31-32**). They did not succeed... because they did not pursue it by faith.

Conclusion

Think about a railroad you are standing on. When you look down, the rails are 4 feet apart. But if you look in the distance, towards the horizon, it appears that at some point the tracks begin to touch each other and become one. God's sovereignty and human responsibility often feel that way. We can see both but we don't see how they fit together. But the more we look towards God and his word the more we see how they are the same line. The same truth. So does God choose us or do we choose God? The answer is yes and amen! Everyone who calls is saved, and everyone who is saved is called.