

GOING DEEPER!

Bible Study

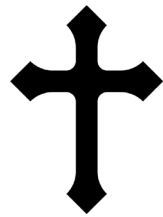
God's Sovereignty & Election



BY REV. AARIF G. BRADLEY, M. DIV

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Key Scriptures



Malachi 1:1-5

A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi. 2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord. “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’ “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob, 3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.” 4 Edom may say, “Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.” But this is what the Lord Almighty says: “They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord. 5 You will see it with your own eyes and say, ‘Great is the Lord—even beyond the borders of Israel!’

Romans 9:6-26

6 It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” 8 In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. 9 For this was how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.” 10 Not only that, but Rebekah’s children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac.11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” 13 Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 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.” 16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. 17 For 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.” 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. 19 One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

22 What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 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—24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? 25 As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people;

and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” 26 and “In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’”

I. DEFINITIONS

Sovereignty

God's absolute right and effective power to govern all things according to His will without any external constraint or input; God is not controlled or persuaded by anything outside of Himself.

Election

God's free and sovereign choice to set covenantal favor on a people for His own redemptive purposes not based on foreseen merit or future history

II. SOVEREIGNTY IN MALACHI 1

God answer's Israel's question how have you loved us? by saying "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob, and Esau I hated."

III. WHERE ELECTION BEGINS

(ABRAHAM)

The first clear act of election begins when God calls Abraham.

Genesis 12:1-3 when God tells Abraham to leave your family and kindred and he promises to make him a great nation and through him all nations will be blessed.

God does not ask Abraham to qualify, nor does He explain why Abraham was chosen. God initiates this relationship entirely on His own.

IV. THE PROGRESSION OF ELECTION

God's election moves from:

- Abraham → Isaac and not Ishmael
- Isaac → Jacob and not Esau

When God says I loved Jacob and hated Esau He is reminded them of a pattern that God has been sovereign in His election in choosing Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and not choosing Ishmael and Esau.

V. TWO KINDS OF ISRAEL – ROMANS 9:6-8

They are not all Israel who are Israel.

Israel can be understood in two senses:

- Physical descendants of Israel (ethnic)
- Children of promise (covenantal)

It is incorrect to assume that since Israelites are Abraham's descendants that God is obligated to all of them. Being connected physically does not equal being chosen by God through covenant.

Abraham had multiple sons, but God did not choose all of his sons to continue His covenant.

God's election was selective even within the same family.

VI. THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING

ELECTION - ROMANS 9:10–13

Paul removes every possible human explanation concerning election:

- Not based on behavior
- Not based on future successes or failures
- Not based on merit

The theological truth of God's sovereign election is that God chooses based on His purpose and will alone.

v.12 In the culture of the Bible the firstborn had priority, but God's choice does not follow human systems

Love = chosen

Hated = not chosen

VII. THE OBJECTION – ROMANS

9:14–16

“Is there injustice with God?”

Paul responds: God forbid I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.

God's mercy is not owed and God's election is based on God's mercy

VII. GOD'S AUTHORITY - ROMANS

9:20–21

Potter = creator with authority

Clay = dependent material

IX. INCLUSION BEYOND ISRAEL -

ROMANS 9:24–26

Election now centers in Christ

Election is no longer traced through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is now centered in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:4)

Christ is the chosen one and people are chosen by being united in Christ.

In Romans 9 God is sovereign in election

In Romans 10 humans respond in faith

X. HOW PEOPLE ARE NOW INCLUDED

No one earns election.

No one is excluded by default. Through Jesus Christ all are included.

- Gentiles are now included
- “Not my people” become “my people” through faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith is the means and faith does not force God’s choice. Faith is simply how we freely enter into what God has provided through Jesus Christ.

God’s election begins with His sovereign will and that same sovereign God has made a way for people to be included through faith in Christ

XI. CLARIFICATIONS ABOUT THE COVENANT

Being outside of the covenant line did not automatically mean eternal condemnation for the individual.

Even outside of the covenant, people are not without accountability to God.

Covenant inclusion does not equal automatic salvation

Covenant exclusion does not mean automatic damnation

Throughout Scripture people outside the covenant line are included when they respond to God:

- Rahab (Canaanite) Joshua 2:1-15; Hebrews 11:31

- Ruth (Moabite) Ruth 1:16-17

Edom as a nation is judged in Scripture (Obadiah 1:1-9) but that is historical judgment not a detailed statement about every individual's eternal destiny

XII. THE PURPOSE OF THE COVENANT

The covenant was never an end it was a means (Genesis 12:3) Israel was chosen for the sake of nations not instead of nations

The covenant had three main purposes:

- To reveal God clearly in history (His law, His character, His holiness)
- To preserve and carry the promise forward
- To bring the Messiah into the world (Galatians 3:16)

The covenant was not primarily about giving one group privilege over others. It was about creating a channel through which salvation would reach anyone

XIII. THE STRUCTURE OF GOD'S PLAN

God chooses to reveal Himself in His divine sovereignty in election through:

- One man (Abraham)
- One nation (Israel)
- One Christ for all nations

Limiting the covenant was part of God's plan to:

- Establish clarity (who carries truth)
- Preserve the message
- Prepare the world for Christ

The covenant narrows (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and then expands through Christ (Ephesians 2:13)

Inclusion of all was always the goal and plan of God.

