

## Understanding The Old Testament Week 6: Salvation, Election, and the Will of God

### Calvinism distinct belief on election:

- 1) God predestines who goes to Heaven, these are the “elect”. This also means God predestines or chooses who goes to hell. Either directly or indirectly. God hand picks who goes to hell vs they are chosen for hell because they are not elect.
- 2) Once a person becomes a believer they are sealed and therefore cannot lose their salvation.

### Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated:

#### Romans 9:13–16 ESV

#### - Context of Romans:

**Paul is writing this letter before he has ever been to Rome to address issues that the Roman church is facing. The church in Rome started after the Acts 2 events (see Acts 2:10). Around AD 49 because of the divide in the Jewish Community in Rome (because of Jesus the Messiah) the emperor banished Jews from Rome. Up to this point, the church was predominantly Jewish led. Now the Gentile believers were in charge. Upon the death of emperor Claudius the command to banish Jews was lifted and many returned to find the Christian church led by the Gentiles. When the Jews come back there is tension because the former leaders of the church have been gone for 5 years. The purpose of the “Letter to the Romans” was to address this key issue, the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers.**

**Paul first starts by stating that the Gentiles are not inferior because they are not Jews (Rom 1-3). Both Jews and Gentiles are lost without Jesus. He then explains salvation is in Jesus alone for Jew or Gentile. He further explains that being elect is not based on ethnicity but faith (Rom 4-10). Having established Gentiles are not inferior he then switches to they are not superior (Rom 11). Rom 12-14 is addressed to all believers on issues of holiness, unity, and following Jesus’ example. He ends with final greetings and a final encouragement to avoid/discontinue division and to be careful of false teachers (Rom 16:17).**

**Hate is a Near East hyperbole meaning: “love less”.**

**In a nutshell this passage (in Romans) on God “choosing” is not about God choosing individuals but is about Israel as God’s elect.**

“But Paul uses the quotation to stress Israel’s role in the salvific plan in contrast to Edom’s. Jacob and Esau are the representatives of their ethnic groups and are tools in the execution of the divine plan of salvation. God is sovereign and freely chooses Jacob as such a tool. There is no hint here of predestination to “grace” or “glory” of an individual; it is an expression of the choice of corporate Israel over corporate Edom” - Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary; Anchor Yale Bible Commentary

#### **Esau sells his birthright for a meal: Genesis 25:29–34 ESV**

#### **Esau marries Hittites, brings pagan gods into his father’s house: Genesis 26:34–35 ESV**

Esau was a rebellious man and a near sighted man. It wasn’t that God rejected someone who loved him. God rejected Esau because of the choices Esau made. It should be noted that God did give the Edomites land in the land promised to Abraham.

Eventually the Edomites (descendants of Esau) would become pagan worshippers and the Lord would judge Edom.

### **Pharaoh as a vessel of wrath: Romans 9:17–23**

Israel (the nation) is being compared to Pharaoh in this passage. This isn't a passage about Pharaoh or individuals at all. This passage is about how just because Israel is elect, they have rejected the Messiah. God will use that rejection by the Messiah to bring Gentiles into the family of God, which will in turn make Israel jealous and return to Him.

Read: Romans 11:20–24 – Notice Israel was “cut off because of unbelief” and a warning not to do the same. We choose which “vessel” we are: 2 Timothy 2:20–21

### **Let's presume that it is speaking to individuals and let's look how this doesn't work:**

God says He will harden Pharaoh's heart: Exodus 4:21; Exodus 7:3

- When we actually get to the confrontation it says Pharaoh's heart was hardened it doesn't specify who hardened it: Exodus 7:14
- It then remained hard: Exodus 7:22
- Then Pharaoh hardens his own heart: Exodus 7:22
- Pharaoh's heart was hard: Exodus 8:19
- Pharaoh hardened his own heart again: Exodus 8:32 ESV
- Pharaoh's heart was hard: Exodus 9:7 ESV
- God hardened Pharaoh's heart (1<sup>st</sup> mention of God doing it): Exodus 9:12 ESV
- Pharaoh hardens his own heart again: Exodus 9:34–35 ESV
- God harden's Pharaoh's heart: Exodus 10:1 ESV; Exodus 10:20 ESV; Exodus 10:27 ESV; Exodus 11:10 ESV

### **First question:**

**If we have no freewill how did Pharaoh already have a hard heart, and then harden his own heart?**

### **Second observation:**

**What does hardening a heart even mean? Does God ask an angel for a “harden Pharaoh's heart button”.**

God doesn't need to press a button or hit a switch. All God had to do to harden Pharaoh's heart was threaten his belief and the belief of the Egyptians that he is a god, that he is in control, and that he has the power:

**Exodus 1:7–10:** Israel being fruitful and multiplying and filling the land.

**Exodus 5:1–2 LEB:** A Challenge To Pharaoh's Divinity

The Plagues: Every plague is a direct attack on the gods of Egypt, including and especially Pharaoh.

God hardens people's hearts by letting them make a freewill choice in response to the actions of those who believe in Him and carry out God's will.

We respond one of two ways when our beliefs are confronted, we change our beliefs, or we resist to the bitter end. Pharaoh chooses the second option when he and his gods are shown to be powerless against Yahweh.

**Pharaoh was always going to be “that guy”. God didn't have to do much to get Pharaoh to make himself and example of the supremacy of Yahweh.**

The only thing keeping us from being “Elect” is our choice to believe him or not: **Romans 10:8–13**

**Calvinism's idea of election doesn't work in the OT (or NT). For theology to work it must work consistently, God doesn't change.**

In the OT the Abrahamic family are the elect. The Israelites and anyone who stops worshipping foreign gods and starts worshipping Yahweh becomes elect.

- The mixed multitude out of Egypt. They weren't all Hebrews. Exodus 12:38.
- Rahab (Joshua 2)
- Ruth (The Book of Ruth)
- The two women above are in Jesus' own ancestral lineage! (And King David's)
- Naaman and Elisha: 2 Kings 5:1-19.
- Some of David's mighty men were converted Gentiles. (2 Samuel 12)
- David dropped off the Ark of the Covenant at a converted Gentile's house (2 Samuel 6:10)

**In the NT it is the same; those who believe in Jesus (who is Yahweh) and the finished work of the cross are grafted into the Abrahamic family. (Galatians 3:7)**

**Can we lose our salvation or "election"? No but it can be abandoned.**

Saying we lost something means that we would have first had to find it or earn it. Because He found us, and we cannot earn salvation we cannot lose our salvation, as if it's an accident. We can, however, reject our salvation.

If election just simply meant we are saved and we cannot reject it, then heaven will be full of Baal worshipping, child sacrificing Israelites. We know that is not the case. Think of the countless times Israelites turned from Yahweh to other gods. Israel is Yahweh's Elect People/Nation, yet there are "elect Israelites" in hell right now because they rejected Him.

**Salvation and Election cannot be taken away from you. You cannot lose salvation, nor can you lose your status as God's elect if you sinned today. We can, however, choose to rebel against our savior and reject salvation and our election as His people.**

2 Timothy 2:20–21 (ESV) <sup>20</sup>Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. <sup>21</sup> Therefore, **if** anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

"Greek Grammar - Third Class Condition Definition: The third class condition presents the condition as uncertain of fulfillment, but still likely. The structure of the protasis involves the particle ἐάν (English: 'if or unless') followed by a subjunctive mood in any tense." - Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament (3. Third Class Condition) See the "if" in the verse above

**Why would the writers of the New Testament use this class of grammar so often when it comes to holding on to your salvation if you couldn't let it go? The idea of Christians being unable to apostatize (turn away from Jesus and forfeit salvation) actually contradicts the text itself.**

Hebrews 3:1–6 (ESV) "**if** indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope."

Hebrews 3:7–15 (ESV) "Today, **if** you hear his voice, *do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion...* **if** indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, **if** you hear his voice, do not harden" ...

**Israel will/is turning to Jesus and back to Yahweh. Romans 11:22–26 ESV**

**Salvation is for those who believe, not robots who are forced to follow programming. Romans 4:1–12 ESV**

## **The plagues of Egypt as Spiritual Warfare:**

Judgement again the gods of Egypt: Exodus 12:12; Numbers 33:3-4

Staff into a serpent that eats the serpent-staffs of Pharaoh's Magicians: Exodus 7:1-13

Egyptian God: Apopis (also called Apep)

Lesson: The staff that Yahweh turned into a serpent is showing that He is above evil (a common association with serpents). That Yahweh's serpent eats the other serpents is an attack against the serpent gods and the magicians of Egypt.

Plague 1: Water Turned To Blood (Ex. 7:14-25)

Egyptian god: Pharaoh/Horus - in charge of order and provision

Lesson: The LORD alone provides for our needs and calms forces of chaos. (Mark 4:39-41)

Plague 2: Frogs (Ex 8:1-15)

Egyptian goddess: Hekhet - in charge frogs and fertility.

Lesson: The Lord is in control sovereign over fertility and over all things.

Plagues 3 and 4: Gnats, Flies (Ex 8:16-32)

Against: The Egyptian religious system/priests. Priests shaved every other day to avoid bug nesting on them.

Lesson: We must worship the Lord alone, no one comes before Him.

Plague 5: Egyptian Livestock Die (Ex 9:1-7)

Egyptian god(s): Re, Isis, Apis and more - in charge of food/livestock/sustenance.

Lesson: The Lord is our provider. Yahweh Jireh (Genesis 22:8). We are to worship the Lord alone.

Plague 6: Boils (Ex 9:8-12)

Egyptian god: Sekhmet - in charge of plagues and healing. Continued attack upon the Egyptian religious system.

Lesson: The Lord alone is our healer. Yahweh Rapha (Exodus 15:26).

Plague 7: Hail (Ex 9:13-35)

Egyptian god and goddesses: Nut, Shu, and Tefnut: in charge of the sky, supporting the sky, in charge of moisture.

Lesson: The Lord is our provider. He is sovereign over all creation.

Plague 8: Locusts (Ex. 10:1-20)

Egyptian god: Senehem - in charge of protecting against the ravages from pests. General duty of all their gods to protect the fields.

Lesson: The Lord is our provider. Yahweh Jireh.

Plague 9: Darkness (Ex. 10:21-29)

Egyptian god: Re (Amon-Re) - in charge of life and death.

Lesson: The Lord alone gives life. The Lord alone determines what is right and wrong. The Lord alone gives life and salvation

Plague 10: The Death of the Firstborn (Ex. 11:1-12:32)

Egyptians gods: Pharaoh/Horus and all the gods.

Lesson: The LORD is the one true God. No one is like Him, there are none beside Him. He alone deserves our worship.