

Series: God Saves #1434

**Title: Romans 8.29b; Romans 9
An Alternative View**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. It's good to have you here. And it is entirely possible that you have been listening to me, over the course of the last several weeks, discussing predestination and human free will and you object to, well, at least some of what has been said. In fact, I anticipate that there is at least one of you out there who would like to propose another way to look at God's foreknowledge and God's predestination. And your view will include a way to preserve both God's predestination of us *and* our truly free human will, meaning our natural ability, to choose Christ.

The reason I bring this up is because I have heard many Christians offer such a view. What I would like to do is tell you what the view is, as best I understand it, and then we will discuss the merits of it. OK? Are you with me? Here is an opposing view on predestination and human free will from the one I have given to you. Let's use our imagination. Those of you visual learners will appreciate this. Imagine God. Imagine God in eternity past, before we existed, even before the world existed. There He is, God and God alone.

Even though God is alone, existing before time begins, He has the ability to look ahead, down the corridor of human time in this world. And as He looks ahead, God knows what each of us are going to do. He sees that some people will choose to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved from sin. He sees that other people will choose not to believe in Jesus Christ and not be saved from their sin. He sees some using their free will to receive Christ and others using their free will to reject Christ. God knows our choices before we make them. And so He knows perfectly well what is going to happen in the future. And remember, God knows all of this before He even creates anything or anyone.

So let's pick a person, a made up person, and use her as a little case study. Here we have Emily. She was born in 1975. Emily grew up in a home that was hostile to Christ and Christianity. Her parents were vehemently set against anything religious and in particular anything Christian, because of some very bad experiences they had in church. But in 1995 when Emily was in college, at the big State University, she became best friends with another young woman who was a Christian, and a Christian of the real radical variety. She evangelized Emily relentlessly, constantly telling her about the gospel. This friend urged Emily to believe in the Lord Jesus and not to delay in doing so, and one night – Emily can remember this as if it were yesterday – the Lord encountered her in such a way that Emily dropped to her knees in her dorm room and prayed that she would belong to Jesus.

So, Emily, in the year 1995 set out as a disciple of Jesus Christ. She was born again. The Holy Spirit transformed her life, and since then it has been a long obedience in the same direction with Christ as Emily's Lord. She has been a Christian for over twenty-five years. Emily, using her own free will, chose to believe in Jesus in the year 1995.

Now let's get back to God in eternity past, God before the foundation of the world, God looked ahead from way back there to 1995 and He saw that Emily will choose Christ. And God, knowing what Emily's choice will be, He then chooses Emily as one of His own people. God knew Emily's choice before she made it. So, God then chose Emily's eternal destiny (heaven) based on what He knew she would choose. In other words, God chose Emily because He knew in advance that Emily will choose Him. This allows for *both* God's predestination of Emily *and* Emily's totally free choice of God.

In this view God predestines based on our choices. Because He knew Emily would choose Jesus, in her dorm room in 1995, then God from before time began predestined Emily for heaven. The elect then are those whom God knows will freely choose Christ. And the reason this view exists, and the reason it is a very popular view, is because it seems to preserve *both* God's predestination of us *and* our truly free human will, meaning our natural ability, to choose Christ. Believe me, a lot of Christians very much like this view. But our task here in this ministry is not to base what we believe on how popular a certain view is, but rather on how biblical a view is.

If this view of God's predestination and human free will is biblical, then we will clearly be able to find it in (you guessed it)...the Bible! If God makes His choice in light of His knowledge of future decisions, then God's Word will say so. But, interestingly, the Bible says no such thing! And there is a passage in the letters of the Apostle Paul that *if* God wanted to tell us this view was the right view then He would have done it in this text. But, in fact, the Spirit of God does just the opposite. This very valuable text is in the Book of Romans, and in the ninth chapter, in verses 9-18.

Before I read to you these words, I have to set the context. When we consider an outline of the entire Book of Romans we find that Romans chapters 9-11 very much go together. That is not to say these three chapters are detached from the rest of the Book. They are not. They are not a parenthesis. And these chapters must never be ignored or passed over, especially by those of us who are Gentiles.

And that's because the emphasis, beginning in Romans chapter 9 is on the Jews, God's chosen people. It was likely that the believers in Rome, reading chapters 1-8 may have thought, "If the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for Gentiles, then God must have forgotten about Israel. There is a shift. God's people *were* the Jews, but now God's people *are* the Gentiles." Paul writes to correct that view, because that is definitely not what Paul was saying at the start of the letter. The Apostle demonstrates that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is very much for the Jew as well as for the Gentile.

If you are Jewish, I very much encourage you to read all of Romans, especially chapters 9-11.

Second, Paul writes these chapters to address *why* it was that Israel rejected Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior. Third, Paul writes that individual Jewish people will be saved, *and also* the nation of Israel remains God's chosen nation. Now that is a very brief and succinct outline of Romans 9-11. I am definitely not doing these chapters justice, but our purpose here is to teach a very select number of verses only in chapter 9. And this chapter opens with Paul, himself a Jew, writing about the tragedy of Israel's *unbelief*. That is in verses 1-5. Then, in verses 6-13 some of which we will look at, Paul demonstrates that even this *unbelief* is part of God's eternal plan of redeeming Jews. Followed by verses 14-29, a part of which also concerns us, these verses in which Paul demonstrates how perfectly *just* is God's ministry and salvation plan for the Jews. God is never *unjust*. God is always *just*.

Having said that, setting the context, let's ground ourselves in the text. I am reading Romans 9, verses 10-13. Romans 9, beginning in verse 10, "**And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; ¹¹ for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, ¹² it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' ¹³ Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"**

The Apostle Paul offers the reader a case study. He names Rebekah and her husband Isaac and her twin boys Jacob and Esau. This family of four is key to the Apostle's argument. If you know your Old Testament and specifically Genesis, then you know of this family. Of course, every Jew would/will certainly know this story, Isaac being one of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Partly because we are running low on time and partly because I just think this is a good idea, I have a little homework assignment for you.

Before we meet again tomorrow, get a hold of the Bible and read Genesis chapter 25, beginning in verse 19. Beginning in Genesis 25 and verse 19 read through the end of chapter 28 or even the end of chapter 29. Friends, read about this family in Genesis chapters 25-29. That will give you valuable background as we move through these verses in Romans. Again, Genesis 25, verse 19 through Genesis chapter 29. Read that and then join us again tomorrow. We will put this view to the test and see what the Bible says about predestination and human choice on God Is.

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