

Series: God Saves #1444

Title: Romans 8.29b, 9.13, 17-18

Two Views of Double Predestination

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. As begin this reminder: two weeks from tonight, on Thursday evening May 25 I will be hosting a ZOOM video call with *you*! That is, those of you who sign up. If you are interested in talking on Thursday evening May 25, all you have to do is email me to get the link for our call. The topic will be God's foreknowledge and predestination and I hope to have many of you. As we move along on this sometimes difficult to explain and understand doctrine – to be sure an important teaching in the Bible – I want to make sure you have an opportunity to talk back to me. What are you learning? What questions or comments do *you* have? This is your chance to speak with me and to hear from other *God Is* listeners as well.

Email me today, mark@godisministry.org so you can participate. That's mark@godisministry.o-r-g. 7PM US Eastern Standard Time on Thursday, May 25 (in just two weeks). Why delay? Write *today*!

The topic before is double predestination. And we have two illustrations, given to us by the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 9, that we want to follow in the Bible. The first illustration is of Esau. The second illustration is of the Egyptian Pharaoh. In Romans 9, verse 13 Paul quotes God. God says, "**Esau I have hated.**" In Romans 9, verses 17-18 Paul writes this, again quoting God, "**For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.'**" ¹⁸ **So then [God] has mercy on whom He desires, and [God] hardens whom He desires."**

By double predestination do we mean that when God says He hates Esau that God has intentionally sown into Esau's heart unbelief, sin, and evil so that Esau will not be saved (so that Esau will not be predestined for salvation)? And by double predestination do we mean that when God hardens Pharaoh that God has intentionally sown into the Pharaoh's heart unbelief, sin, and evil so that Pharaoh will not be saved (so that Pharaoh will not be predestined for salvation)? *No!* That is not what we mean. That is not what the Bible means by double predestination. And rather than just tell you that and move on, I want to *show* you what God *does* do in the Bible.

And so we have been following Esau and his descendants, the Edomites. And we clearly saw that the man Esau and this nation that came from him – the Edomites – were an evil people. They did not need *God* to plant unbelief, sin, and evil in their hearts. All of that was already there. All God did was to pass over them. Let me be very clear. If you miss everything else, get this and write it down: *God never coerces anyone to damnation.* God never coerces anyone to damnation. Everyone who will be in hell, for all eternity, will be there because they want to be there. They will be there of their own free will, if you please.

Historically, within church history, there are have been two views related to this matter of double predestination. Can you propose others? Probably, but let's just briefly look at these two. The first is what is called "equal ultimacy" or "the symmetrical view." In this view God works equally to keep the elect in heaven and the reprobate out of heaven. God works equally, God moves in a symmetrical way, to save some and damn others. God is equally active in giving the gift of faith to those He saves and giving unbelief to those He damns. In our illustrations God intentionally intervenes in the lives of Jacob and Moses to give them the gift of faith so they believe and are saved. *And* God intentionally intervenes in the lives of Esau and the Pharaoh to give them unbelief, to keep them from faith, so they never believe and are therefore *unsaved*. God takes positive action on both. God is active in the lives of both.

This is *not* the view of theologians like Augustine and Calvin. Sometimes I hear this view described as "hyper-Calvinism." That is just not right. It is very insulting to John Calvin and his view of predestination. If you actually study what Augustine and Calvin wrote, you will discover this view is not "hyper-Augustinian or hyper-Calvinism," it is *anti-Augustinian* and *anti-Calvinism*. But that's a discussion for another day.

The view that I have been teaching, the true view of theologians like Augustine and Calvin and (closer to our time) a man like RC Sproul, is this instead. For the elect, for those whom God has predestined and chosen as His people, God does work positively in our lives to actively to grant us the gift of faith. This faith that He plants in our hearts is a *pure gift*. We are sinners whom have done nothing to deserve this grace. But we have joyously received it. We see exactly this in the lives of Jacob and Moses. Read at least Genesis and Exodus and you will find this is what God does with these men, and many others.

But, follow me closely now, for those whom God does not elect, for those whom God does not choose, God only works *negatively*. God is *passive*. God does not plant in these people's hearts unbelief. What God does is He passes them over. He lets them be. He does not give these men and women the gift of faith, but He also does not give them unbelief or sin or evil, God forbid we should ever think that! In our illustrations, God did not intervene in the lives of Esau and the Pharaoh to give them *unbelief* so they are *not* saved. God simply was passive. He let these men and their descendants, as we saw last time with the Edomites, live as they wanted to live in the lusts and pleasures of their flesh, even when they sinned mightily against God and God's elect, chosen people.

So that when, regarding Esau, God says, "Esau I have hated," God does *not* mean "Esau, I have such malicious thoughts about you that I am going to make sure you never make it into heaven!" God *does* mean "Esau, I am passing you over. I am not giving you the gift of faith I gave to your brother Jacob. I am withholding the gift of faith from you." And again, as I have stated and then shown to you, God said this *when* Esau was long dead and the nation of Edom had already come from him and committed heinous evil. Much history had already taken place, proving that God had good reason to hate the descendants of Esau – to hate them with a holy hatred for their evil.

Friends, when God says, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" this is antithetical parallelism in Hebrew mode. That's the technical way to say the same idea is restated in different words, side-by-side. There is an antithesis or contrast. Here, Paul brings together opposing ideas in marked contrast: love and hate. This is how it would be have been understood to the Jews. This declaration cannot be used to support the "equal ultimacy" or "the symmetrical view" I mentioned earlier.

And now, having said this, we come to the Egyptian Pharaoh. We had illustration or case study number one: Esau. And now we have illustration or case study number two: Pharaoh.

Most likely, certainly if you are a Christian who reads your Bible regularly, who knows the Word of God, but even if you join us this day as someone not a Christian, not even religious, and not a Bible reader then you have at least heard about God "hardening" the heart of the leader of the Egyptian dynasty at the time of the Israelites' slavery in that ancient and famous land. There have been ample films and television shows and documentaries available, even musicals, that at least purport to tell this story. God says, "Let My people go!" And the Pharaoh's heart is hardened and he says, "No, I will not let Your people go!" Then God sends the plagues and each time, when it looks like Pharaoh has had enough, he decides to keep God's people in slavery, working them hard in the brick yards of Egypt, instead of granting God's wish.

One of my all-time favorite movies, *The Ten Commandments*, made in 1956 and starring Charlton Heston as Moses illustrates this back and forth between God, and Moses and Aaron, and Pharaoh (played by Yul Brynner). I watch this at least once a year, usually on the Saturday between Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. I recommend it to you. It is 3 hours, 52 minutes of good entertainment. Well, tomorrow when we meet again we will consult the Bible, not Hollywood, to find out about this hardening of the heart. Join us then because God Is!

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