

The Westboro “Baptist” Church Lie – Calvinism’s True Face: Pt. 4

Now in looking at the passage of Romans, chapter 9 and determining whether it states what the Calvinist believes it states, we need to further examine three things:

- 1. Whether the context has anything to do with determining whom the LORD wills for salvation, and who He does not.*
- 2. The actual meaning of “election” as it is used in verse 11.*
- 3. Whether Esau was hated simply because the LORD God chose to hate him, or whether Esau actually provoked the LORD God to anger by his own actions and behavior.*

Let us then begin to examine Romans 9, and what it actually states, and whether the contention of the Calvinists is correct when they claim:

“Esau was cut off because that was God’s will, not anything Esau did.(Romans 9:11-18).”

As previously stated, Romans, chapter 9 begins with a plead for Israel, and ends with the declaration that Israel was condemned because they sought after righteousness, but not by faith. These things are very plain and without dispute. It is what is brought up between the beginning and end of the chapter that creates all the dissension. One of the first things we should note, are the verses immediately preceding the passage so often referenced by the Calvinists:

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they

are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (*Romans 9:6-10*)

One of the first things to note here is the clear reference to the promise of God to Abraham, and though Abraham had other children, only Isaac was the child of promise, and that Isaac, as opposed to Ishmael who was of the work of the flesh, was the child of faith. Hence, there is a criterion already established here of looking at everything from the point of view of faith versus the works of the flesh. What the LORD goes on to tell us, is that only that which is of faith is counted as the seed. In explaining this, the apostle Paul, by the Holy Ghost, adds the explanation of Jacob and Esau, and continues the example as follows:

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (*Romans 9:11-13*)

Here now we have the open statement that the LORD God hated Esau and loved Jacob, even before they were born. Plainly, this is the foreknowledge of God. However, it does not tell us by what criteria the LORD God loved Jacob and hated Esau, other than the context that we have already encountered, which is faith versus works. To answer this question, we must, of necessity go back to the account in Genesis which reveals what happened before the birth of Jacob and Esau:

And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham

begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. (Genesis 25:19-23)

What we find here in Genesis is that the LORD knew about the conflict that would exist between Jacob and Esau, and that conflict began even before the children were born. What it does not tell us, is whether the LORD God chose it to be that way. This leaves us to reference three other places in Scripture and examine what the LORD states about Esau, as a person:

And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. (Joshua 24:3-4)

The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. (Malachi 1:1-3)

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any

fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. (Hebrews 12:14-16)

Now, unless we believe that the LORD God is entirely arbitrary, there is little here to go on as to why the LORD God would hate Esau and love Jacob, even before they were born. The only indication we get is from Hebrews, chapter 12 quoted above, where Esau is described expressly as a “profane person.” Plainly, those holding Calvinist doctrine discount this as they go back to Romans, chapter 9 and look at the statement “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)” and then declare that Esau didn’t have to do anything, it was God’s will that He hated Esau, and hence, Esau could not be saved.

The problem with that interpretation is its inconsistency with the rest of Romans, chapter 9, and the rest of Scripture. In examining, the balance of Romans, chapter 9 we find the following:

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. (*Romans 9:14-16*)

Here all the LORD God has relayed to us, is all he relayed to Moses, that no one dictates to the LORD God who He should have mercy and compassion on, and who He should not. Again, we are also brought back to the fact that it is the mercy of God that is the overriding element at work here, for He states plainly:

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. (*Romans 9:16*)

Since all going before this in Romans, chapter 9 leads up to

this point, and culminates in the conclusion "So then . . ."

And, since the beginning and the ending of the entire chapter addresses works versus faith, it calls to mind another passage:

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (*John 1:11-13*)

Which is as much to say "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," which speaks of our works, and our efforts, but it is to say "of God that sheweth mercy." This clearly means that salvation is wholly of God, and not of any man's working or desire. In short, one cannot be born a Christian, bought into Christ, nor prayed into salvation by those who love him or her. Rather, the salvation of one's soul is entirely the mercy and grace of God, and none other. And so the chapter continues with further examples:

For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (*Romans 9:14-24*)

If we take note of the examples, we find there is no criterion listed for why some are shown mercy, and others destroyed, other than the mercy of God itself. Of course, man being who he is, does not like facing up to the reality of who he is, and so the questions are asked "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" and "Why hast thou made me thus?" The reply to that is first: we have no business challenging God, and second: that vessels are brought forth, some to one purpose, and others, another. Yet, in all this, there is given no criterion for "why" this is the case, other than the "mercy" of God, and that His power will be manifested in the work He performs in the lives of both those who are destroyed, and those who are saved. Upon this, the chapter continues with the condition of Israel, and what the LORD God had to say about Israel versus the Gentiles:

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. (*Romans 9:25-29*)

What this now demonstrates is that all the examples given before were to illustrate to Israel and to everyone else, that they were not special, and were not chosen because of who or what they were. Rather, they were chosen because of some other criteria the LORD God had set. The criterion that was set was indeed made known to Israel; only they forgot it and believed that they somehow merited the favor of the LORD above all others. Nonetheless, the reason the LORD God chose them is

made clear in the following two passages:

Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. (*Deuteronomy 4:35-38*)

Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. (*Deuteronomy 9:4-6*)

Here now we have criteria for the LORD God choosing Israel, despite the fact that the Israelites were a difficult people. That criterion was “And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, . . .” However, we still have no set standard by which we can say the LORD God particularly chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and passed all others by. However, the chapter summarizes and ends with the following, which sheds significant light on everything given as examples in the chapter:

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (*Romans 9:30-33*)

We can see by breaking down the chapter that there is a progression and a purpose in the examples given in the chapter as we arrive in verse 30 to the question:

What shall we say then? (*Romans 9:30a*)

Without question, this construction states that an argument has been presented, with examples to illustrate the argument and prove the point, and that we are now ready to present the conclusion. The conclusion arrived at though, does not address how individuals are chosen, but rather contrasts the outcomes of faith versus works. In the conclusion, it is shown by all aforementioned examples that the works of man are not the determining factor in the plan of God. Rather, the works of man are actually a stumbling block to man when it comes to satisfying the LORD God's requirements for righteousness.

Thus, despite what the Calvinists claim, there is no conclusive proof of any criteria of how the LORD God would will that one person is saved, and another is passed by and thus destroyed in Hell. What we are given is that we are not to seek after righteousness by any means other than faith. Hence, in examining the claim of the Calvinist that "Esau was cut off because that was God's will, not anything Esau did.(Romans 9:11-18)." we are left far short of any proof of anything concerning how that in eternity past, long before Jacob and Esau were born, the LORD God determined that He

hated Esau, and loved Jacob. This then leaves us with the unsubstantiated claim of Calvinist/Reformed theology that the LORD God simply chose to hate Esau, and not because of anything Esau did. Thus, we must turn to “election” as mentioned in verse 11 of the chapter, and see what we can find.

To be continued . . .