

Romans
Divine Election (Part 9)
Romans 9:6-29
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On the wall out in the lobby of this building are the two great distinctives of this church. Maybe you have noticed them. If you have been here any time at all you probably have, you have heard us mention them. But if you are new to our church, you may not have seen them yet. But elevated on the walls are these two statements, “A High View of God” and “A High View of Scripture.” That is what we stand for as a church. How a church handles one specific doctrine is really a test of both of those distinctives.

Listen to John Piper, I came across this quote this week, he says, “It is hard for a fish to know that it is wet. Wet is all there is for a fish. A fish doesn’t even think of it. So it is hard for a modern person, a person living in the last 200 years, to know that he is arrogant toward God. Arrogance toward God is all there is in the modern world. It is the ocean we swim in, the air we breathe. It is woven into the fabric of our minds. We don’t even know it is there. We can’t see it, because we look through it to see everything else.”

Piper continues, “Here is the way C. S. Lewis put it, ‘The ancient man approached God as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge, God is in the dock. Man is quite a kindly judge. If God should have a reasonable defense for being the God who permits war, poverty, and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God’s acquittal. But the important thing is that man is on the bench and God is in the dock.’ That is virtually,” Piper says, “what it means to be modern, the imperceptible feeling, the assumption we don’t even know we have, that it is fitting for us to question and even judge God.” And here is how Piper finishes, “The doctrine of election is one very effective test of whether you are being delivered from the indigenous ocean of arrogance in the modern world, or are still drenched to the bone.”

As we study Romans chapters 9 through 11 we are all having to take that test. Is God God or are we on the bench sitting in judgment of God? This section begins with the question that is raised in chapter 9 verses 1 to 5 and it is this, why have so few Jewish people believed in their Messiah? And does that mean that the purposes of God for His Old Testament people Israel

have somehow failed? This was an important question in the first century. It's still an important question because if God's purposes for His Old Testament people failed, what keeps His purposes for His New Testament people, the church, from failing?

Now we have been studying Paul's answers. He gives three answers to this question. The first answer and the one we have spent several weeks on is, the reality of divine election. This is why so few of the Jewish people have believed, and this answer comes in chapter 9 verses 6 through 29. Now just to remind you, this paragraph begins in verses 6 to 13 with divine election explained and illustrated.

Look at verse 6, "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." Paul's answer to why so many Jews failed to believe in their Messiah and His gospel, in the first century and still today, is that not every physical descendent of Abraham was a true Israelite. God had chosen, even among the nation of Israel, to leave many in their sin, to pass them by and to give them the justice that their sin had earned. So why were there some who believed, like Paul? Why were there some who came to believe in Jesus as their Messiah? Paul's answer, here in this passage, is that God chose them to be the recipients of His saving grace. That is the essence of what we learned in that first part of this larger section.

The second point that Paul makes here we could call, divine election defended. Having explained and illustrated it with the patriarchs, in verses 14 to 23 he defends it against two main objections. They are the same objections that we face today to the doctrine of election. Objection number one, God's will isn't fair. That just isn't fair, for God to choose who it is that He will save. Objection number two is, if that is true, then it must mean man's will isn't free. Now, if you weren't with us as we walked through those paragraphs and you have those objections to the doctrine of election, I encourage you to go back and listen, because Paul answers them thoroughly.

But today we come to the third and final part of this section on election and it is divine election applied. It begins in verse 24 and runs down through the end of this section, verse 29. Now, as he has done throughout this letter, in this section Paul relies very heavily on the Scripture, and that is because he wants us to understand that the concept of divine election is evident

throughout the Hebrew Scripture. He is looking back at the Old Testament as we called it, the Hebrew Scripture. And so in verses 6 to 13 Paul uses the patriarchs as an example, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In verses 14 through 18 he uses the Exodus, and especially Moses and Pharaoh, as examples of the elect and non-elect man. And then in verses 24 to 29 we are going to see that he uses the prophets, specifically Hosea and Isaiah, to show that throughout the Old Testament these great truths are taught.

Now let's look at this paragraph; let me just give you a sort of roadmap of verses 24 to 29. In verse 24 Paul lays down his theological conclusion. Look at verse 24. The "vessels of mercy" are, "even us, whom He called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles." That is his point, God chose from both Jews and Gentiles. And then in the next five verses Paul quotes one after another, several Old Testament passages as biblical evidence to prove that theological conclusion that he makes in verse 24.

What Paul is doing in these verses is he is now applying the truth that he has taught about divine election to the question he started with, the question of why so few Jews in the first century believed in their Messiah. And using the Hebrew Scriptures he shows that the prophets taught, first of all, that it was always God's plan to save Gentiles and, secondly, that it was always God's plan to save only a small remnant of the Jewish people. So Paul's application begins then in verse 24 with a theological conclusion that God chose, God elected, both Jews and Gentiles to salvation.

Now let me ask you, as we have been studying this, have you ever wondered who the elect are? You know, as Spurgeon commented, "It is not like they walk around with an E emblazoned on their foreheads." Well, here in this very verse, Paul actually identifies the elect. Now, let me show you the connection. Clearly verse 24, you can see it in the English as well as in the Greek, is grammatically connected back to verses 22 and 23. So let's get a running start, go back to verse 22,

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?
And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy,
which He prepared beforehand for glory.

Who are those vessels of mercy? Verse 24, “even us.”

Writing to the Christians in Rome and, of course, to the future generations of Christians as well, Paul says, “God chose us.” But, of course, that invites the next obvious question, who is us, to use bad grammar. Who does he mean by us? Well, verse 24, he defines it, “even us, whom He also called.” Now Paul is using this word called here the same way that he did back in chapter 8. Go back to chapter 8 verse 28, “we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God,” this is a definition of all Christians, those who love God, and “to those who are called according to God’s purpose.”

And then he goes on to explain what he means by called. Verse 29, “For those whom He foreknew,” we learn that means those with whom God decided to have a relationship, those with whom He predetermined to have a relationship, “those whom He foreknew, He also predestined.” That is, He predetermined their destiny. When He decided to have a relationship with them He decided that, when He was done, notice verse 29, they would be “conformed to the image of His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Now watch how this plays out in verse 30. In eternity past God foreknew, He predetermined a relationship, and He predestined that we would be like Jesus Christ, “and those whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He justified;” He declared to be righteous before Him, based solely on the work of Jesus Christ, “and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Now notice in this text that all of those God calls in this sense are justified. What we are talking about here, we defined it when we went through it, is the effectual call. The effectual call happens when, through the gospel and the Holy Spirit, God powerfully, irresistibly, calls the sinner to Himself and that sinner comes. Let me put it like this, in response to the call of God, we then repent and believe in the gospel.

So let me ask you a question Christian, when was it that you repented of your sins, that you realized your only hope was in the work of Jesus Christ, in His life, in His death, in His resurrection, you realized you were a sinner who deserved only God’s judgment, that your only hope was found in Christ, and you repented of your sins and you believed in Jesus Christ and

His work alone? When did that happen to you? That is when you were effectually called. God was in the gospel as you heard it that day calling you powerfully to Himself.

Paul says the way you know that you are elect, the way you know that you are one of the vessels of mercy is that God has called you through the gospel to Himself. So how do you know, how do you know if you are elect? Two questions, question number one, have you repented of your sins and believed in Jesus Christ as I have just described it? Or, if you have not, are you willing to do so even now and to call out to God? If either of those things is true, then you are one of the elect.

Now next Paul gets to the main point he wants to make here about the elect, the theological conclusion in verse 24, here is the crux, “even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.” Now we throw that word Gentiles around a lot in, you know, in the church and as we look through the Scripture. Understand that the Greek word for Gentile is a word that has been transliterated into English. It is *ethnos*, from which we get the word ethnicity. It means, the Greek word means, a nation or a people.

When it is used in the plural, as it is often in Scripture, it means the nations, or as we use it, the Gentiles, because in a biblical way of thinking you have God’s chosen nation, Israel, we are talking about the Old Testament Scriptures now, you have God’s chosen nation, Israel, and then you have the nations, that is the Gentiles, that is all it means, the nations. You have got the Jews and everyone else, Jews and Gentiles. Jews, God’s chosen nation, and the nations, the peoples of the world. So do you see what Paul is saying here? In eternity past, God chose individuals that He would save, not only out of the Jews, but also out of the Gentiles, the rest of the nations, the non-Jewish people as well.

Now we sit here and that sounds like old news to us, but do you understand that God could have chosen to save nobody? That would have been absolutely right of God. God could have chosen to save only those who were part of the Jewish people. But He didn’t. Paul says it was always God’s plan to save some from that nation and some from the nations of the world. So his point here is, Jews can’t claim that the only way to belong to the people of God is by becoming Jewish and Gentiles can’t claim that God has entirely rejected the Jews. God has called vessels of mercy out of both groups.

Now God's plan of redemption has always been to save a people both from the Jews and from the nations of the world. I mean that He intended to do that with the Jews is obvious, right? That is His chosen people. But God's plan is equally clear in that God always intended to save Gentiles. Paul is going to make this point a little later in a different way. Go over to chapter 15, Romans 15:8, he says,

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [*that is, to the Jewish people,*] on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the [*patriarchs, to the*] fathers [*there is the Jewish people*], and Christ has also become a servant for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy.

And then he gives this, again another string of verses in the Old Testament.

as it is written,

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

Again he says,

“REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”

And again,

“PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”

Again Isaiah says,

“THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
[*and I love this, this is us,*]
IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”

This was always God's plan.

That plan is clear throughout the Old Testament. You see it beginning with the covenant made with Abraham. You remember in Genesis 12:3, God says to Abraham, “in you” all the nations “will be blessed.” What did that mean? Well, fast-forward to Galatians 3:8 and Paul says this, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.’” That line is about us, many of us here in this room who are Gentiles.

You can see this same mission in the covenant that God made with His chosen people Israel at Sinai. In Exodus 19:6 He says to the nation, here is your job, here is your job description, “you will be a kingdom of priests.” Your entire nation is going to be like priests. To whom? To the world. You are going to represent God to the world. Ultimately that is fulfilled in the Messiah, Isaiah 42:6, “I am the LORD, I have called You,” speaking to Israel, “in righteousness, I will also uphold You,” this is to the Messiah rather, “I will also uphold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You,” speaking to the Messiah, “as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations.”

The entire book of Jonah makes this point when Jonah, of course, doesn’t want to go to that wicked people and preach the gospel. But the point of the book of Jonah is that God shows mercy on repentant Gentiles. And God’s Old Testament intention to save Gentiles is often intensely personal in His salvation of individuals. Go back and read the stories of Rahab the prostitute, read the story of Ruth the Moabitess, and so many others.

Now, when you come to the New Testament, this ministry of God to reach the nations comes out clearly in the ministry of Jesus. Now, I know, maybe the first passage that comes to your mind, Jesus said He came first to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. That was the primary thrust of His ministry. That is where His earthly ministry was centered. But it is equally clear that He had a much wider ministry in mind. In John 10:16 He says, “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also.” He is talking about sheep outside the nation of Israel, they are “not of this fold, I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”

Jesus understood that because God had long before determined that Jesus’ ministry would reach beyond the Jews. Turn to Matthew 12, Matthew 12 and notice verse 17, “This was to fulfill

what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet.” Now what is going to follow here, this is a quote from Isaiah 42:1-4. If I took you back to Isaiah 42 you would discover that this is a section about the Messiah; it is about the servant there in Isaiah’s prophecy. Now notice how He’s described, this is how Christ the Messiah would function, ““BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED.”” This is God now speaking about the Messiah,

“BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN;
MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL-PLEASSED;
I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM,
AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO [*the nations, to*] THE GENTILES.
HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT;
NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS.
A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF,
AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT”

Those, by the way, are both images of something that seemed absolutely worthless to human beings. In other words, Jesus would come and He would redeem those who are considered absolutely outcast, worthless, and he would do so, notice verse 20,

“UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY.
AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE.”

This was the plan of God, recorded by the prophet and lived out in the life of Jesus. And of course, if you want any proof of Jesus’ sort of international mindset, just fast forward to His commission to His disciples. In Matthew 28:19, what does He say? ““Go therefore and make disciples of [*what?*] all the nations,”” the Gentiles. This was the plan.

Now the early church got it. The early church pursued this worldwide mission of the church with a passion. Now, it was slow to begin with. Initially, after Jesus’ ascension, the focus in Acts 1 through 8, really 1 through 9, was primarily on the Jews or on Jewish proselytes or on the Samaritans, who were, of course, part Jewish. But all that changes in Acts chapters 9 and 10, and specifically in chapter 10 when Peter, in response to that heavenly vision, you remember, of the sheet that comes down out of heaven and it’s got all these unclean animals on it. And God

says, “Don’t call unclean what I have cleansed,” and there is a knock on the door and there are representatives of Cornelius, a Gentile. And Peter gets it, he connects it; this is what God is teaching me. And he goes and he shares the gospel with Cornelius. This is when the gospel breaks out into the Gentiles.

Here is how that event is explained in Acts 11:18, “When the Jewish believers heard Peter’s report,” about what happened with Cornelius, “they quieted down and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.’” And of course, at this same period of time, God saves a Jewish rabbi, a zealot by the name of Saul on the road to Damascus, and He assigns him, and you know there is a great deal of irony in this, have you ever thought about this, you are the apostle to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15, “the Lord said to Ananias ‘Go,’” go to Saul, who would eventually become Paul, “‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles as well as the sons of Israel.’”

Now the rest of the book of Acts fleshes out this newfound understanding. Let me just show you a couple of references. Look at Acts 13, Acts 13:46,

Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary,” [*now speaking to Jewish synagogue,*] “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us,

‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES,
THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’”

Look at chapter 14 verse 27. This is the report of the first missionary journey when they had arrived and gathered at the church there in Antioch, “they began to report all the things that God had done with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”

Chapter 15 verse 3, “they were” “describing,” at the Jerusalem Council, “in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.” Verse 7, “Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.’” Look at verse 14, this is James, the half-brother of Jesus, talking now about Peter, “Simeon has related

how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.” And he says, listen, this is what Scripture teaches, verse 15, “For with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written.” And he goes on to show how the Old Testament Scripture makes this very point.

One last reference, look over to Acts 28. At the very end of the book of Acts as the early church continues to explode with growth, Acts 28:28, Paul as he arrives there in Rome says, “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.” And of course, if you go to the end of the New Testament, you find that it points to the completion of this worldwide mission, because in Revelation 5:9 we read this,

they sang a new song, saying, [*this is in the presence of God now, believers in the presence of God talking about and to the Lamb,*]

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and You purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Now again, as we sit here, what I have just belabored to show you may seem clear and obvious, but it is not and that is why the New Testament had to make so much of it. This was a shift in the thinking of people who lived in the first century.

There are two applications of this for us; I just want to draw it to your attention. First of all, God obviously intends that the world benefit from the work of Christ. That included us, I love this, us, there many of us here who are Jewish, and we praise God for you, but there are also many of us here who are Gentiles and who sit here a world away from that nation that God chose and from where Jesus our Lord lived and ministered. What Paul is telling us, that is what has happened to us is not a divine afterthought; it was designed. Let me put it more personally, you are not an afterthought, you were part of God’s eternal plan.

But there is another implication of what Paul says in verse 24 and it is this, God’s election of Jews and Gentiles not only authenticates, but it demands the church’s mission to the world.

This was what God intended to do. That is why Jesus, you remember in Luke 24 He is talking to His disciples after the resurrection and He opens up for them an understanding of the Old Testament. And He says, listen, “it is written, that the Messiah had to suffer,” and all that He went through and be raised from the dead, and then He adds this, it is also written that “repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in Messiah’s name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

You see, when you understand divine election, a lot of people think, let me start and put it this way, a lot of people think that if you understand election it is going to absolutely kill evangelism, when in fact the exact opposite is true. I challenge you to go read the biography of the father of modern missions, William Carey, and you will see that he was as committed to these truths as anyone you will ever meet and yet he went to India and birthed, by God’s providence, modern missions. How and why? Because of his confidence in this very doctrine.

You see, when you understand divine election and when you understand God’s heart for the nations, it will motivate you to pray and to support the international mission of evangelism because, (Why?) “The Lamb who was slain deserves the reward of His suffering,” a redeemed humanity who will forever bring Him praise from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Not only will it cause you to pray and support missions, but let me just say, it may be that God intends for you to go. Let me ask you a very simple question, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, if you are a disciple, have you ever, in your life, made yourself available to God? Have you ever said this: *God, I don’t know what your plans are for me. I don’t know how you have gifted me, but if the elders affirm that I am gifted and that I am qualified, I am willing to do whatever it takes to truly get trained and prepared to go, and to go. If that is what you want God, here I am, send me.* Have you ever said that to God? Every Christian should because that is God’s heart. Paul’s application of election begins with a theological conclusion, God chose both Jews and Gentiles.

Now next, in verses 25 to 29, he provides us with the biblical evidence that God chose both Jews and Gentiles. He has made the assertion and now he is going to back it up with Scripture. And he begins with the Gentiles. And we see, in verses 25 and 26, God’s amazing choice to

save Gentiles. Now, the key point in these verses is that when God chose to save us Gentiles, we were in no sense His people. Look at verse 25,

As He says also in Hosea,

“I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’”
AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM,
‘YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,’
THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.”

Now in verse 25 Paul freely quotes from Hosea 2:23 and in verse 26 he quotes from the Septuagint version of Hosea 1, the second half of Hosea 1:10. Now, for many of you Hosea is not a familiar book. It should be and maybe, at some point, I will preach through that book because it is a powerful book.

But I need you to have a little bit of background to understand exactly what it is Paul is saying here. So turn back with me to the book of Hosea for just a moment, Hosea 1. We are in a time period 700 years before Christ, in the low 700's B.C., the eighth century B.C. And in that time period God commanded the prophet Hosea to marry a woman by the name of Gomer. Now, I have always thought that that alone should have been reason to know there is trouble coming, but that was her name. Gomer would eventually become an adulterous wife, and the point of it was to powerfully picture the spiritual adultery of the 10 northern tribes and their idolatry with Baal worship.

You remember, when the kingdom divided after the death of Solomon, there were two tribes in the south, Judah and Benjamin; they are called usually Judah. And then in the North you had 10 tribes and they are usually called either Israel or they are sometimes called Ephraim because the largest tribe of the 10 was Ephraim, the most influential. So you had two in the South, 10 in the North. The 10 in the North were led by Jeroboam into full out idolatry. He constructed his own surrogate temples in the north where they would worship, and it ended up being a very syncretic kind of worship with Baal worship, the fertility agricultural God of the Canaanites. It became thoroughly going pagan.

And so understand that the reason God commanded Hosea to marry Gomer, who became adulterous, was to picture the spiritual adultery of the 10 northern tribes as they had gravitated to the worship of Baal. And in so doing, in their idolatry, and this is key to the point, they became no different than Gentiles. They were not spiritually God's people and they were not the objects of His love. And so, Gomer then has three children and God commanded Hosea to name each of his kids, and it turns out at least a couple of them probably weren't his kids, but to name the three children names that would describe God's coming judgment on the unfaithful northern kingdom of Israel.

So look at Hosea, all that background, but look at Hosea 1:4. Verse 3 says, "he went and took Gomer, she conceived and bore him a son." This one was apparently his son. Verse 4, "the LORD said to him," okay, I want to "name this boy Jezreel." Jezreel means God scatters. Why would you name your son God scatters? "For yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel." This is when Jehu, remember, killed all the descendants of Ahab, murdered them, "and," here is the key, "I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel," the northern 10 tribes. God was describing the coming invasion of Assyria when they would be wiped off the map.

Verse 6, "Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to Hosea, 'Name your daughter Lo-ruhamah.'" Lo is the word for no or not in Hebrew. So, not pitied or not loved, can you imagine? This may not have been Hosea's child and God says, I want you to name your daughter not loved. Why? Notice the end of verse 6, "for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them." Not loved.

Look at verse 8, "When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son," the third child born to Gomer. And the Lord said, "Name him Lo-ammi." Again, Lo meaning no or not, and ammi, my people, not my people. Name your third child, your son, not my people. Why? Verse 9, "for you are not My people and I am not your God." God says, I am done.

But in Hosea we see God's steadfast love, how He simply cannot let His people go. And in the book of Hosea God promises that, in grace, He would eventually reverse the meaning of these children's names. Look at chapter 1 verse 10, the second half of the verse,

Where it was said to them,
“You are not My people,”
It will be said to them,
“You are the sons of the living God.”

Go over to chapter 2 verse 23 and here God corrects the meaning of all of the children’s names, all three of them. Verse 23, “I will sow her for Myself in the land.” Remember, God scatters. The first time He used it He meant, like in judgment, He scatters them to the winds, to the nations. Here He means I will sow them in the land, I will scatter them like seed in the land and they will grow up and prosper. “I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion,” I am going to love the one who had not been loved, “And I will say to those who were not My people, “You are My people!” And they will say, “You are my God!””

Now go back to Romans 9, because that is the context of the verses Paul quotes here in Romans 9. Now in Hosea those verses describe the northern 10 tribes of Israel in the eighth century B.C. They had deserted God. They had abandoned themselves to idolatry with Baal and in so doing they had become absolutely no different than Gentiles. They were not God’s people. They were not the objects of His love. Verse 26 of Romans 9, “it was said to them,” or God said to them, ““You are not my people.”” That is an emphatic rejection. But in God’s grace, in the future He promised that they would again be treated as God’s people. Now, here in Romans 9 Paul uses these verses from Hosea in a wider sense, not just of the apostate Jews of the northern kingdom who were acting like Gentiles, but of every non-Jewish person on the planet by birth and by nature.

If you are here this morning and you are not Jewish, by birth and by nature we are all, and if you are Jewish as well this is true of you, but let me talk to Gentiles for a moment, we are all, by nature, not God’s people and not beloved. In fact, here is how Paul puts it in Ephesians 2:12, he says, “remember that you were at that time,” before your conversion, “separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” That is how we all were. That is how I was born. That is how you were born. By the way, this is a powerful reminder that you can’t earn your way into God’s favor. You can’t make yourself one of God’s people. You can’t make yourself an object

of God's love. We are born not his people. We are born not beloved. God has to take the initiative. It is by His decision alone that we can become His people. Do you see why election is so important?

Now Paul especially drives this home in these verses here in Romans 9. Let me show it to you because under the inspiration of the Spirit, as Paul quotes both of those passages from Hosea, he does what we are not authorized to do. He was an apostle under the inspiration of the Spirit. He changes those quotes. And he, in quoting both passages, he changes a key verb. In the Hebrew a generic word that just means to say is used, God said. But when he quotes it, he changes it to the verb to call, and he changes the word order to put that verb first. Look at verse 25, "As He says also in Hosea, 'I WILL CALL;'" notice that.

"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,'
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'
AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM,
'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,'
*[That is, wherever, in whatever place they were scattered and
regarded as aliens to God.]*
THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

Don't miss this. This is a huge point Paul is making; it is why he changes the wording. He says, God says, I will call them my people, I will call them beloved, I will call them sons of the living God. This is a different use of the word call. Back in verse 24 it referred to the effectual call, where God calls us to Himself through the gospel. Here it refers to the reality that God simply spoke and it was so, God's divine fiat. He made us His people just like He did in creation. You remember in creation He says what? "Let there be light." And what happens? There is light.

Christian, what Paul is saying here, by using that word call, is, he is making the point that by God's sovereign gracious declaration alone, you have become one of God's chosen people. Look at verse 25, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, "MY PEOPLE.""" That is you. You are one of God's people. And one who is especially loved by God. Look at verse 25 again, "AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, "BELOVED.""" The special object of my love. And

by sovereign gracious declaration, you have become a son or a daughter of the living God. Notice verse 26,

“IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM,
'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,'

THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED [or God himself will call us] SONS
[*daughters*] OF THE LIVING GOD.”

By the way, Peter uses this very same passage to refer to Gentiles as well. Turn over there. Look at 1 Peter, 1 Peter 2:9. He has just talked about those in verse 8 who are disobedient to the Word, who have been appointed to doom. And he says, “But you,” verse 9, “But you are A CHOSEN RACE,” you have been chosen by God, and he quotes from Exodus 19, you are “A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD’S OWN POSSESSION,” you are God’s people. Why? “So that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Verse 10, here is the quote, “for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY,” you had not received God’s love, “but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.” Now you are the special object of His love.

How in the world does that happen? How do we, who are not God’s people, we who are not loved by God, we who are not sons of the living God, but are sons of Satan himself, as Jesus describes in John 8, how do we become all of this? There is only one way. Turn to Ephesians 1. Here is the one way it happens. Ephesians 1:3,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, [*and here it is*] just as He [*that is, the Father*] chose us before the foundation of the world.

There is election, He chose us. But how did it happen? I skipped over two crucial words. Look at it again, verse 4, “just as the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.” Listen, the only way you went from being not God’s people, being not the one He loved, to being one that is His child, sons, daughters of the living God, the only way that happens is that “He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.” This is sovereign grace. This is

why election matters, because this is the only way you and I would have ever been reconciled to God. Thank God for His grace. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we end where we began this morning and that is, with the recognition that You and Your Word are exalted, that we are not qualified, it is not our job to sit in judgment on You and Your eternal plan of redemption and how You worked it out. Lord, forgive us for our pride, forgive us for our arrogance, forgive us for acting like we, who are the puny creatures of day, have a right to sit in judgment on You and Your word. Father, humble us, remind us that all You have to do is wish it so and we will crumble in a moment into dust.

But Father, help us to worship You, not only for Your greatness, but for the greatness of Your grace in Christ. Lord, we were certainly not Your people. We were not the objects of Your love and didn't deserve to be so, ever, and still don't. But in Your own sovereign grace, You have called us Your people, beloved, Your sons and daughters. Father, may we live in the light of that, may we champion this worldwide message of the gospel. Lord, help us to be evangelists in our own backyard with the people in our lives, and give us a passion for the world, pray and support, and even to be open to go.

Father, I also pray for those who may be here this morning who are not in Christ. Help them to see that the only way to know whether or not they are elect is, are they willing to come in repentance and faith to You and cling only to Your Son, to His perfect life, to His substitutionary death, to His resurrection, as their only hope of ever being right with You. Lord, may this be the day when they cry out to You for "“WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”" We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.