

Show Casing “Election”

Series Article 4 – ‘Tradition Hinders Spiritual Growth’

Today, the primary question resonating around the topic of “election” is whether a loving God can choose some to be saved and not others. If this subject is approached from a philosophical standpoint, for sure, God showing preference seems unfair. However, our theology shouldn’t be derived from human reasoning but from what the Father reveals about Himself in His Word. And He makes statements like, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord” (Isa. 55:8). So, as I see it, the real issue related to this theme is how much we’re willing to abandon self-influenced rationale and surrender to God’s way of thinking (Rom. 12:1-3; Eph. 1:16-19; 3:14-21).

Well, I’ve already spilled the beans. Therefore, I’m not going to pretend this article deliberates whether God chooses His children just as a ploy to keep people reading. For, I’m confident anyone who studies the Bible for themselves can grasp this truth, and more so if they can apply principles from the Greek text. So, my aim isn’t to ‘Reinvent the Wheel’ by re-defining “election” but to compose a contemporary and practical presentation about the hub, spokes, and tread of this operation as it’s presented in terms of God’s “will”, “calling”, “foreknowledge”, “predestination”, and other language related to His “purpose”.

In the Church Epistles, **Instruction about Election Exclusively Refers to Conversion and Never to The Process of Sanctification**. So, nothing written in this paper should be applied to how the Spirit works in the post-salvation lifestyle of Christians. Since, only after being justified before God, made alive, and given the Holy Spirit can we produce good works by choosing to utilize His power. Unlike Scripture related to the New Covenant based Kingdom, *Truth Comprising The “Administration of Grace” Doesn’t Teach God Causes Our Good Works* (Ezek. 36:26-32; Zeph. 3:13; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 3:2-9, 16-19; 4:20-24).

Section 1: The Human Condition

As we begin this study, I think a good starting place is to address the elephant in the room – the frequently bantered around concept of ‘Free Will’.

What’s Meant by ‘Free Will’

With reference to salvation, Scripture mentions or alludes to the human “will” many times. Several contexts indicate everyone possesses a ‘will’ which is exercised to accept or reject the gospel. Therefore, we need to identify how this created feature of our makeup functions in the field of evangelism. After detecting

its role, this data can be compared with the prevailing definition of 'Free Will':
Every Person is Able to Obtain Eternal Life by Choosing to Believe in Christ's Payment for Sin.

So, what does the Bible say about how our human 'will' responds to the gospel? Recently, a friend shared that he'd conducted a search in one of my articles for the terms of 'election' and 'free will'. It turns out, 'election' showed up a couple dozen times, but 'free will' didn't strike any matches. He asked why I thought this happened. My reply was that the phrase 'free will' doesn't occur in the N.T., so I'm inclined not to use it. Turns out, he already understood this point but just wanted to solidify his views on the matter.

We proceeded to discuss a few relevant Scriptures which affirm *The Salvation Message Should be Presented as An Appeal to The Will*. For example, Paul said to the jailkeeper at Philippi, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"** (Acts 16:31). Many portions can be cited to demonstrate the principle **Human Volition is Involved** (John 3:16; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-23; 10:9-10).

Another question at the heart of this discussion is, **'When people exercise faith in Christ or reject His redemptive work, is their choice Coerced or Forced?'** I know of no passage which includes these concepts; on the contrary, *Respondents are Portrayed as Making Sincere, Deliberate, and Glad Choices* (Acts 2:38-42; 7:54-60; 13:48-51; 16:14; 17:32-34; 1 Thess. 2:14-16; 2 Thess. 2:11-14). Both decisions are presented as entirely voluntary.

Nonetheless, an often-overlooked-factor which needs to be integrated into how people respond to the gospel are **Celestial Energies Working Behind the Scenes**. For, since *The Fall* triggered by Adam, *unsaved gentiles* exist in the following state: **"And you being dead ones in regard to your transgressions and sins, in which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler (Satan) of the authority of the air of the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience"** (Eph. 2:1-2). [Throughout this article, **relevant thematic terms in Scripture quotes will occur in Red Bold Type** and should be recognized as *emphasis mine*]

This same context continues to present *unbelieving Jews* in a similar Lost condition, **"and among whom we (Paul and other Israelis) all once lived our lives in the lusts of our flesh, while doing the wills (or "desires" – θεληματα) of the flesh and mind processes, and in reference to nature we were children of wrath as the rest"**, that is, gentiles (v. 3).

Added to this, Second Timothy 2:25-26 urges us to evangelize with a mild approach, “. . . lest once God might give repentance to them unto a full knowledge of the truth and they might sober up out of the **snare** of the Devil, who have **chosen to be made captive** by him in the direction of that one’s **will**” (θελημα). Together with Ephesians 2:1-3, this portion specifies every unbeliever’s ‘will’ is confined by the Devil’s “will” since they “**have chosen to be made captive** (εξωγρημενοι – perfect, middle/passive form) **by him**”.¹ In other words, the unsaved *willingly* or *volitionally* stay in this moral prison since “**the spirit**” of the world’s “**ruler**” (Satan) is “**now working in**” (or “**energizing**” – present tense) them to function in a manner consistent with “**disobedience**” (Eph. 2:2).

Based on these existing evil forces, how can anyone break away from their dominance? Virtually every theology espouses *An Entity Stronger Than the Devil is Needed to Escape his Grasp*, and that entity is *The Holy Spirit* (1 John 4:3-6). Thus, the conviction that people can get out of the Devil’s “**snare**” by independently accepting Christ is based on the assumption all unbelievers have a prior encounter with the Spirit which enables them to believe.

The main proof text for this point is John 16:7-11 which details the work of the “**Spirit**” – “**the Comforter**” (παρακλητος), *Counselor* or *Advocate* (cf. 14:26; 15:26). “**And having come, that one will expose the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment; indeed, concerning sin because they don’t believe unto Me, also concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me, also concerning judgment because the ruler (Satan) of this world has been judged**”. Also, John 1:9 is cited for support, “**He (Christ) was the true light, which illumines every man who comes into the world**”.

The problem with this stance is **No Scripture Actually Teaches The Holy Spirit Functions Inside All the Unsaved**. On the contrary, in this same portion Jesus explains, “**I will send Him (the Spirit) to you**”, meaning to *His disciples* (John 16:7). Then, after being “**filled with the Spirit**” they disseminated their convicting message to “**the world**” which exposed sin and garnered both positive and negative responses (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 7:51-60). The notion the Spirit worked inside to convict each unbeliever who heard *Lacks Biblical Backing*. Therefore, no visible support exists for the idea: The Lost inherently possess what is sometimes called ‘**A Spark of Divinity**’ which prompts them to believe. Without this **Phantom Capability**, mankind finds itself in a very bleak state.

So, in this *Morally Dead Darkness* how can a person see the light of the gospel (Eph. 2:1-2)? Second Corinthians provides an answer: “**if our gospel has been and continues to be covered** (κεκαλυμμενον – *hidden* or *veiled*, perfect tense), **it has been and continues to be covered** in those persistently **choosing to be**

made to perish" (present tense, middle/passive, 4:3, cf. 2:14-16).¹ The next verse explains *Why the Unsaved* have this **"covering"** (καλυμμα – 3:13-16) on their conscience, **"in whom the god of this age** (the Devil) **completely blinded** (aorist indicative) **the thoughts of unbelievers unto the outcome for the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ not to dawn"** (4:4). **This narrative depicts Satan in Complete Control of His Children** whom he's **"blinded"** from seeing the need for **"the gospel"**, a key component of the consuming **"snare"** to do his **"will"** (John 8:44; Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:26).

Happily, *The Remedy for This Dilemma* is quickly revealed, **"because God is the one who said, 'Out of darkness a light shines', who shone in our hearts toward illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"** (2 Cor. 4:6). The noun **"illumination"** (φωτισμον) is the same term used in verse 4 which describes what **"the god of this age"** keeps from *dawning* or *rising like the sun* inside his children. Its use in verse 6 with the phrase **"God . . . who shone in our hearts"** divulges He's the **Agent** or **Force which Causes Enlightenment to Accept** the **"gospel"**. For, He's powerful enough to pierce the Devil's realm and free **"those who choose to be made captive"** to his **"will"** (2 Tim. 2:26).

Note, this **"light"** appears **"out of darkness"** (2 Cor. 4:6). **The Essence of God is Light** so this **"darkness"** must refer to the Lost's *unilluminated*, **"dead"** state (vv. 3-4; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; 1 John 1:5-7). For, Satan's children, like their father, are consistently presented as consumed with **"darkness"** and void of any kind of light or **'Spark of Divinity'** (Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79; 22:53; John 3:19; Rom. 2:19; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:8; 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 5:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:9).

Also, what does the pronoun in the phrase **"our hearts"** denote (2 Cor. 4:6)? Moving forward, we'll see it's used repeatedly with reference to God's chosen ones in whom the Spirit initiates acceptance of and belief in the **"gospel"** (Rom. 8:15; 10:9-10; Gal. 4:5-6, 9). If He didn't reach out and *shine in us* **"toward illumination"** and **"give repentance . . . unto a full knowledge of the truth"**, we too would remain hostage under the Evil One's **"will"** (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Gal. 4:9; Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:25-26). In conclusion, **the Word doesn't teach the Spirit resides inside all the unsaved; it only provides examples of Him operating within God's "elect"** (1 Cor. 1:23-31; 2 Tim. 2:10).

Man's Natural Will & God's Will

In this segment, we'll take a deeper look at the role the human 'will' plays in salvation. In Romans 9:11, Paul writes that God **"calls"** men to accomplish His **"purpose . . . according to election"**. A few verses later he identifies how this act is initiated, **"Consequently therefore, it's not associated with the one who wills**

(θελοντος), also not associated with the one who runs, but associated with **God who shows mercy** (v. 16). This participle is derived from the same root as the noun “will” (θελημα), so its action specifies men aren’t redeemed based on *human want, desire or volition*. Next, the term “the one who runs” (τρεχοντος) refers to *human exertion*, which is also a non-factor (Mt. 27:48; John 20:4; 1 Cor. 9:24-26; Gal. 2:2; Heb. 12:1). Instead, in redemption, “**God who shows mercy**” (ελεωντος) replaces *man’s volition and action*, that is, human “works” (Rom. 9:12, 18, 23; 11:30-32; cf. Eph. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:13-16; Tit. 3:4-7).

This **Behind-The-Scenes Divine Will** is expressed in similar manner in the Gospel Accounts. John 1:12-13 says, “as many as received Him, He gave them authority to choose to become children of God, the ones **believing** unto His name, who not out of bloods, also **not out** (εκ – or *from the source*) **of the will** (θεληματος) **of the flesh**, and **not out** (εκ – or *from the source*) **of the will** (θεληματος) **of a man**, but they were caused to be born **out** (εκ – or *from the source*) **of God.**”

The infinitive “to choose to become” (γενεσθαι – middle voice) and the verb “were caused to be born” (εγεννηθησαν) are two forms of ‘γινωμαι’. This verb of being means *to come into existence*, and its *resultant state* is described here by the *transaction of becoming* “children of God”. Also, the passive voice form of the verb specifies an *outside force* “caused” this process, which is identified as “God”. Being “born” as His children emerged “out” (εκ – or *from the source*) of Him, *from within His essence or Person* (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:8-9). So, just like Paul, John isolates **God as The Source and Cause of Rebirth**.

Later, Christ develops this concept, “I say these things in order that you might be saved” but “you aren’t believing who (Jesus) that one (the Father) sent” (John 5:34, 38). Then He concludes, “You search the Scriptures because you think to have eternal life in them, and they exist to testify concerning Me; and **you don’t will** (ου θελετε) **to come to Me in order that you might have life**” (vv. 39-40). In the next chapter, the Lord explains who *do want* to come to Him; they’re the ones “the Father gives to Me” (Jesus), also described as the *Chosen* or *Elect* (6:37-40, 65, 70). Then, John 8:44 further defines those who reject, “You are out (εκ – or *from the source*) of the father, the Devil, and **you will** (θελετε, or *desire*) **to do the lusts of your father**; that one was a murderer from the beginning, and he hasn’t stood in the truth because the truth isn’t in him”.

In addition, Christ proclaims, “no one’s able to come to Me except the Father who sent Me might draw him” and “except it might have been given to him out (εκ – or *from the source*) of the Father” (John 6:44, 64-65, cf. 1:13). He also explains how

this works, **"the Spirit is the one who makes alive** (ζωοποιουν), **the flesh profits nothing"** (v. 63). In a similar way, right after Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul writes how these believers got out of their hopeless state. It was God's **"mercy", "love", and "grace"** which, **"while being dead ones, . . . made us alive** (συνεζωοποιησεν) **with Christ"**; we were **"saved"** by a **"free gift of God"** (vv. 4-5, 8-9; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:13). So, both Jesus and Paul categorically teach **God, the Holy Spirit, Is The Source which Ignites the Will** (θελημα) **of the Chosen to Desire Christ.**

Concluding this Section

Taking into consideration the underlying spiritual forces which initiate positive and negative responses to the gospel, *No One Can Exercise Faith in Christ Apart From Divine Intervention*. For, **Without the Spirit's "illumination", Everyone will Voluntarily, Emphatically, and Automatically Refuse Redemption** (2 Cor. 4:4, 6). This is because the idea of needing salvation is outside an unbeliever's natural realm of reason. The thought of having the need to be delivered from sin by an exterior force is illogical, ridiculous, and even insane (μανιαν = 'mania', Acts 26:24) to those confined under the Devil's **"will"** (Rom. 8:7-8; 2 Tim. 2:26).

On the flip side, when the Spirit intercedes, *He Supernaturally Enlightens Folks to See Their Need for Reconciliation and Gives Them Faith*. During this interface, **Those who Believe Never Feel Pressured but Gladly Accept Christ's Work on The Cross** (Rom. 8:14-16; 2 Cor. 4:6). Historically, this interaction between man and Spirit has been termed **'Irresistible Grace'**, a concept taught by theologians including Augustine at the turn of the 5th century and Martin Luther in the 16th. In fact, Luther published one of his most famous books about how salvation works, which he also considered his best, *The Bondage of the Will*.²

To review, today many Christians promote the idea the Spirit convicts the minds and hearts of all unbelievers as the gospel is preached. This stance is united with the concept all people have a 'Free Will' capable of producing faith in Christ's payment by self-determination.³

But based on the above expositions, I don't believe this point of view is correct. For, I see Scripture teaching: **Left to Ourselves, Men won't Accept the Gospel but, Instead, will Maintain Resolute Resistance**. This principle is articulated in Romans 8:7-8: **"on account of the cause the mindset of the flesh is at enmity in the direction of God, for it doesn't choose to be made subject (middle/passive) to the law of God, for also it can't choose to be made able** (ουδε . . . δυναται – middle/passive); **also those existing in the flesh, can't choose to be made able** (ου δυναται – middle/passive) **to please God"** (cf. John 6:44 & 65).¹ Biblical

revelation consistently portrays *Every Person Functions with This Doomed Capacity Unless God Intervenes*.

For, the Lost exist in a "dead" state, spiritually "blinded" to the gospel, and trapped in the Devil's moral prison to do his "will". Accordingly, all men are headed toward "wrath" until **God turns the tide** by applying His "love", "grace", and "mercy" to make His elect "alive with Christ".

"Election" is Compatible with 'Free Will'

This Popular Conviction encompasses the thought God selects people for salvation, yet this act doesn't inhibit or violate man's 'Free Will'. Sounds rather good, huh? For, this position lends credence to the scores of passages which detail "election" while it elevates the idea of 'Free Will' to equal status.

Having observed the ramifications of this dual belief, the part which stresses the Lost can generate faith tends to dominate while instruction about "election" is minimized or just ignored. In most cases, I've seen this stance cause Christians to bypass attention away from God's awesomeness and exclusivity in regeneration. As a result, many Body members miss out on the benefits of comprehending truths which help kindle a sense of Divine security, well-being, humility, thanksgiving, and other paybacks akin to this heavenly practice.

Additional Matters Related to 'Free Will'

Some Christians equate an unbeliever's ability to generate saving "faith" with *Adam's Initial Decision* to eat the "fruit" since they perceive his act represents a 'free will' choice. However, when he sinned it's important to recognize he wasn't in need of redemption nor in **A Fallen State Shackled by the Ball and Chain of Blindness and Captivity** to "disobedience" under the Devil's "will" (Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:26). Furthermore, perplexing evidence exists as to whether Adam truly made an independent decision when he ate from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6).

This question stems from the fact God knew salvation from sin would be needed before he transgressed. For, we read, "knowing . . . you were redeemed . . . by the valuable blood . . . of Christ, indeed **having been foreknown** (προεγνωσμενου) before the creation of the world, also having been made manifest upon the last of the times because of you" (1 Pet. 1:18-20; cf. Acts 2:23-24). Since God made provision for redemption *before* Adam's original sin, how should we think about the way his devastating choice came about? Did he really

make a 'free will' decision or was it somehow prearranged by the Creator? As far as I can see, there's no clear-cut answer, but we know Scripture always holds him 100% responsible for sin entering the world (Rom. 5:12-19). For reflections on how his decision may have transpired, see [Appendix I](#).

Beyond this comparison, some relate man's so-called 'free will' decision making capacity to Jesus' choices. However, like Adam, Christ didn't need redemption and never was "captive" to the Devil's "will". And unlike all human beings, Jesus was both God and Man, so He always functioned in perfect concert with the Father's "will". Consequently, His decision-making shouldn't ever be cited to represent how humans make choices, for, unlike us, He was without sin and not dogged by the "old man" (Heb. 4:15; 7:26). Further reflection on the Lord's decision-making process is found in [Appendix II](#).

Finally, regarding the concept of 'Free Will', believers should bear in mind after we're made alive in Christ and receive the Spirit, we enter a new state of "freedom" (ελευθερία) from the Law and its entrapment to sin (Rom. 7:7-25; 1 Cor. 10:29; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1, 13). For, we're no longer "slaves" to "sin" but a "new creation" in "Christ" who can choose to "walk in" and be controlled by "the Spirit" (Rom. 6:4-16; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:16-18; 6:15; Eph. 5:18). In this **Newly Liberated State**, it's appropriate to define choices Body members make to obey or disobey God's dictates as 'Free Will' Decisions (2 Cor. 10:5-6). For, our victory over sin isn't automatic like it'll be for the Redeemed in the Future Messianic Kingdom (Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:27; 37:23-24; John 3:21).

Section 2: Divine Intervention

The Source of Saving Faith

Since Satan has "covered" the "minds" of the spiritually "dead" from experiencing "illumination" from the gospel, how do folks come to trust in Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:1-3)? The answer is found in several contexts which portray *God Working in People so they can "sober up out of the snare of the Devil" and Accept Salvation* (2 Tim. 2:26, cf. John 3:20; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 2:1-9; 4:18). This marvel is exemplified by the conversion of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened to take heed to the things being spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). The Book of Acts documents his preaching in many places; some who heard responded with "faith" and others didn't. So, what do we learn about those who believed?

Earlier, Luke records the response which followed the apostle's first recorded message at Antioch of Pisidia, "having heard, the gentiles were rejoicing and

glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as had been arranged (τεταγμενοι) unto **eternal life believed**" (Acts 13:48, entire address vv. 16-47).

This participle is derived from the verb "τασσω" which means *to arrange* or *put in order*.⁶ Most Translations render it 'appointed' or 'ordained', either of which properly represent the idea. These same Versions emphasize the term's *perfect tense* and *passive voice* which correctly portray the intent, **Those Who Accepted Paul's Preaching Had Already been Positioned and Conditioned to Believe since God** (the outside force) **Elected Them Before Creation** (Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9). Those interested in how the Greek grammar develops this thought should read **Appendix III**.

In similar manner, following Paul's message on Mars Hill which ended abruptly when he brought up *The Resurrection*, Luke writes, "**Also, certain men believed, after having been caused to join** (κολληθεντες) **him, and among whom was Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman by the name of Damaris and others with them**" (Acts 17:34, entire address vv. 22-31). This aorist passive participle specifies *these individuals were acted upon by an outside force to join Paul before they "believed"*.⁷ This term indicates *God caused them to be glued or to cleave "to him"*, then trust his message about **"the Man (Christ) He (the Father) ordained"** to **"judge the inhabited world in righteousness"** (v. 31).⁸ Other passive voice terms and contextual dialog in this Book illustrate how God set the table for people to believe for salvation (Acts 9:1-19; 10:29-33 w/43-45 & w/11:13-17; 11:24; 16:14; 18:9-11; 22:14; 26:15-16).

While conducting his ministry, Paul's outlook was based on this reality. Therefore, he didn't take people's reaction to the gospel personally but persisted in boldly proclaiming it. That's because he realized some would be offended by his preaching but also knew **"the elect"** would believe it to **"obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"** (cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-28; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; 3:4-5; 2 Tim. 2:9-10). So now, let's *Examine This Apostle's Perspective on How the "elect" Receive Saving Faith* by surveying sections from his Epistles.

Philippians 1:27-29

These verses challenge Christians to **"conduct"** ourselves **"in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ"** amid the persecution we face (1:27). We're not to be **"frightened in anything by those who oppose, which to them is a display of destruction, also of you a display of salvation, and this from God"** (v. 28). This passage teaches how we can thrive while suffering scary resistance when we adhere to **"salvation"** affirming truths, **"because the thing (το) was graced to you**

on behalf of Christ, not only the (το) outcome to **believe** unto Him, but also the (το) **outcome to suffer on His behalf**" (v. 29).

The verb "**was graced**" (εχαρισθη) is built on the same root as the noun "**grace**" (χαρις), so it depicts *an act of unmerited favor*. Most Versions translate it 'given' or 'granted', neither of which make crystal clear *God's grace is the source*.⁹ Also, the neuter nominative article "**the thing**" (το) is the subject of this verb. This article's initial occurrence serves like a pronoun *standing in for two subsequent article-led phrases* which are the real subjects: "**the outcome to believe**" (το . . . πιστευειν) and "**the outcome to suffer**" (το . . . πασχειν).¹⁰

These infinitive constructions express action, but since they're subjects of the passive voice verb "**was graced**" (εχαρισθη), this relationship makes them *direct-object-activities done by an outside agent*, which is identified as "**God**" (Phil. 1:28).¹ Applying this grammar to the first phrase, the *Resultant Action* (infinitive) of *Ongoing* (present tense) *Belief, Trust* or *Faith* was "**graced**" to us by Him. Note, this response wasn't given to all men, but "**to you**" (υμιν), the Philippian believers. Their persecutors who didn't receive divine intervention had the opposite reaction of *rejection* and *antagonism*, an outward "**display**" (ενδειξις) of the "**destruction**" they're headed for (Rom. 9:21-22; Eph. 2:3; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

In contrast, Body members have "**salvation, and this** (τουτο) **from God**" (Phil. 1:28). Demonstrative pronouns *represent concepts conveyed* by single terms or contextual ideas. Here, "**this**" (τουτο) includes *the contextual activity* related to "**salvation**", namely *endless* (present tense) *faith and suffering* (v. 29). And most noteworthy to the theme of this composition, **We're Able to Believe Because this Act "was graced" to Us by "God"**.

The second phrase, "**the outcome to suffer**", is an identical grammatical construct, so it too specifies *God "graced" us to undergo affliction*. Dozens of passages expand on the fact He saved us to do battle amidst inevitable anguish "**on His behalf**" (Rom. 5:3-5; 8:18-25; 2 Thess. 1:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:12; 4:1-8). Though most believers champion this facet of God's purpose, many still minimize or ignore its equally true counterpart – *Unmerited Favor Infuses the Elect with Trust in Christ* (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 2:4-9; 1 Tim. 1:14).

First Timothy 1:12-17

Historically, this is the final context which testifies to Paul's conversion. So, what did he need to be redeemed from? He was "**formerly a blasphemer and persecutor and malefactor, but I was shown mercy because, while being ignorant, I acted in unbelief**" (απιστια – v. 13). This term affixes an alpha "α",

negating an adjoined word, to the noun “πιστις”, which depicts *faith*, *belief*, or *trust*. This account adds to the picture of Paul’s spiritual darkness and defiance as he acted out Satan’s “will” (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:26). So, how did he escape this wicked state? He “**was shown mercy**” (ηλεηθην – 1 Tim. 1:13).

This verb means God *didn’t give him what he deserved*, which was “**wrath**” (Eph. 2:2). And *the reason* given for needing “**mercy**” is “**because**” he operated “**while being ignorant**” (αγνοων) in “**unbelief**” (Rom. 9:18, 23; 11:30-32; Eph. 2:4; Tit. 3:5). This word transliterates into our term ‘agnostic’ which portrays *a state of not knowing* – the psychological gridlock in which all unbelievers are obviously stuck (Rom. 2:4; 10:3; 2 Pet. 2:12). In conjunction with “**mercy**”, “**the grace** (χαρις) **of our Lord overabounded**” (υπερεπλεονασεν), *though Paul didn’t merit or deserve it* (1 Tim. 1:14). This verb affixes the preposition “υπερ”, which means *above*, to the verb “πλεοναζω”, meaning *to be more than enough* or *exceed*. Thus, God’s “**grace**” *hyper-outperformed* Paul’s depravity which is why he could be saved.

Next, like Philippians 1:29 states, God’s “**grace**” cascaded into his life “**with faith and love in Christ Jesus**” (1 Tim. 1:14). This specifies, his “**faith**” (πιστεως), the *ability to believe*, was *One of The Elements* “**with**” (μετα) or *accompanying* the “**grace**” he received. Prior to meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road, Paul lacked trust in Christ as well as godly “**love**”. But since the Lord’s plan for him was to become the “**pattern of those about to believe upon Him unto eternal life**”, Paul “**was shown mercy in order that in me, the foremost (sinner), Christ Jesus might display** (ενδειξηται) **all longsuffering**” (1 Tim. 1:16).

One of the Father’s main goals in redemption is to “**display**” or *reveal* His traits, and this passage features His immense “**longsuffering**” (Rom. 3:25-26; 9:17, 22; Eph. 2:7; Phil. 1:28). Also, note the verb “**I was shown mercy**” (ηλεηθην) is repeated a second time which *Stresses Divine Pity is Basic* to how He saves men (1 Tim. 13, 16, cf. Rom. 9:15, 18, 23; 11:30-32; Eph. 2:4). Furthermore, by making Paul a “**pattern**” or *representation* of “**mercy**” plus “**grace . . . with faith**” shows God can redeem worst-case-scenario offenders.

Before leaving this passage, I encourage each reader to check out all seven accounts of Paul’s salvation. You’ll find they vastly differ from most ‘testimonies’ heard today since *None of Them Contain a Hint that Paul Chose to ‘Believe’*. Nor does he ever say he ‘came to know the Lord’ or claim he had any part in his redemption (Acts 9:1-19; Gal. 4:9). On the contrary, we just saw his “**faith**” was a result of God’s abounding “**grace**”. Also, Acts 9:15 designates him as a “**chosen** (εκλογης or “**elect**”) **vessel**”. And *the exact time he was converted* is described in terms of “**when God was well pleased**”, which connects this event with God’s eternal “**purpose**” for him (Gal. 1:15, cf. Rom. 9:11-12; 11:1-6).

Moreover, Philippians 3:8 says he **"was caused to lose"** (ἐζημιωθην) **all things** – Jewish accolades he boasted about prior to salvation (vv. 4-7). This passive voice verb indicates *an external force* **"caused"** him to reject self **"righteousness"** in favor of the **"righteousness of God through the faithfulness"** (πιστεως) **of Christ** and enabled him to respond by **"faith"** (v. 9, cf. Acts 22:3-16; 26:4-18; Rom. 7:7-12; Gal. 1:13-17; Phil. 3:4-9). Recapping: **God Extended "Mercy" and "Grace" Along With Saving "Faith" to Paul so he Could Be a Current Pattern for How Even Treacherous Sinners are Regenerated.**

Ephesians 1:13

On the surface, this verse may seem unrelated to the topic at hand, but its grammar brings it front and center. A literal translation is: **"and in whom you, after having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and in whom, after having believed, you were sealed with reference to the Holy Spirit of promise."**¹¹ First, the two phrases **"in whom"** (ἐν ᾧ) tie this portion back to verse 3 which states God has blessed us **"in every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ"**. Then, on **Ten More Occasions**, verses 4-14 expound on these blessings by framing our access to them with the adverbial phrases **"in Christ"** (ἐν Χριστῷ), **"in whom"** (ἐν ᾧ), **"in Him"** (ἐν αὐτῷ), and **"in the beloved"** (ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ).

Each phrase includes the preposition "ἐν", and *Each Word Group Serves an Adverbial Role Describing the Action Words* they're paired with. So, in verse 13, the phrase **"in whom"** (ἐν ᾧ) modifies two nominative plural aorist participles. Also in this verse, the nominative plural pronoun **"you"** (ὁμεις) serves as the subject of these participles in addition to the verb **"you were sealed"** (ἐσφραγισθητε). These points of grammar combined form the core sentence: **"after having heard"** and **"after having believed"**, **"you . . . were sealed"**.

Now, what relationship do these participles have with this adverbial phrase? The first "ἐν ᾧ" describes *the realm* or *sphere in which* these believers heard **"the word of truth, the gospel"**. It happened *within an in-Christ realm* which is the same way God **"caused Himself to choose"** (ἐξελεξατο – middle voice)¹ them **"in Him"** (ἐν αὐτῷ) **before the creation of the world"** (Eph. 1:4). The only method He could've used to *select us* in eternity past was to look forward to Christ's payment for sin, apply it to us, accept us **"in Him"**, then view us as **"holy and blameless"** (Rom. 3:24-28; 4:22-25; 1 Pet. 1:18-20). This contextual link to the first adverbial phrase in verse 13 specifies those who **"heard"** or *responded with reception to* **"the word . . . the gospel"** (accusative *direct objects*) did so because *They Were Previously Chosen* **"in Christ"** (cf. John 6:44-45, 60-65; 10:3, 27-30).

Likewise, this linguistic connection applies to the second phrase, "**in whom** (ἐν ᾧ), **after having believed**" (πιστευσαντες), which signifies those who heard "**the word . . . the gospel**", also "**believed**" it (Eph. 1:13). However, some Translations render this phrase '**believed in Him**' which makes Christ the direct object instead of "**the word**" and "**the gospel**".¹² This rendition loses the adverbial force of the words "**in whom**" (ἐν ᾧ) and deters the reader from correlating the acts of *hearing* and *believing* in verse 13 with the divine action contained in verse 4.

Consequently, Ephesians 1:3-14 teaches **God's Chosen Ones "in Christ" Hear the Gospel Message, Believe it**, then are "**sealed . . . unto redemption . . . unto the praise of His glory**". Correctly understood, this section portrays the same truth as Acts 13:48, "**as many as had been arranged unto eternal life believed**".

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For in reference to grace you have been saved through faith, and this *is* not out of you, *it's* the free gift of God; *it's* not out of works in order that no one might boast."

Most Translations render these verses in a similar manner. However, Greek terminology behind the phrase "**you have been saved**" (εστε σεσωσμενοι) warrants a closer examination which is found in **Appendix IV**. These verses are one of the most cited portions to identify the source from which Christians obtain belief, yet they're interpreted in several ways. Some claim the demonstrative pronoun "**this**" (τουτο) refers to the word "**grace**" (χαριτι); others say it refers to "**faith**" (πιστεως). Actually, both viewpoints are incompatible with the Original since this neuter pronoun doesn't match the gender of either feminine noun. So, "τουτο" doesn't relate to them in the same way most pronouns function in the Greek language.

We've already seen this same demonstrative pronoun in Philippians 1:28. There I pointed out "**this**" (τουτο) *represents the contextual concept of properties surrounding "salvation"* which includes the acts of belief and suffering (v. 29). Some years ago, I came to realize all demonstrative pronouns convey a concept about nouns they agree with in form. But when they appear in this neuter nominative/accusative form, they *Demonstrate A Contextual Concept* or *The Concept Conveyed by the Neuter Nouns They Agree With* in gender and number. For evidence to support this definition, those interested can read **Appendix V** which covers the nine other times "τουτο" occurs in this Epistle.

Accordingly, here "τουτο" represents *the entire process of being saved by grace through faith* (Eph. 2:4-5, 8). That's why the text proceeds to explain "**this**" (τουτο)

isn't "out (ἐξ) of you"; it's not "out (ἐξ) of" human "works"; it's a "free gift (δωρον) of God". Since God is The Source of *This Package Deal*, no person can "boast" in any part of salvation unless we *brag about the Person who accomplished it in us* (v. 9, cf. Rom. 3:20, 27; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:29-31; 3:21). For clarity, "ἐξ" is a form of "εκ" which is used several times to specify spiritual birth isn't "out (εκ) of the will of the flesh, also not out (εκ) of the will of a man, but out (εκ) of God" (John 1:12-13, cf. 6:64-65; Rom. 9:11-12; 11:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Tit. 3:4-7). Therefore, **When Properly Understood, "this" (τουτο) Refers to Saving "Faith" Bundled With the "Grace" Given to God's Elect** (Eph. 1:4; 2:8).

Romans 8:8 + Hebrews 11:6

Connecting precepts garnered from these two passages tell a singular truth: *The Lost are Unable "to Please God", So They Can't Produce "Faith"*. Note, Hebrews 11:6 says, "apart from **faith**, it's impossible **to please** (ευαρεστησαι) *Him*, for it's necessary for the one who comes to God **to believe** that He exists and becomes a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him." This infinitive unites the adverb "εὖ", portraying the idea of *good*, with the verb "αρεσκω", which means to "**please**" or *make amends*. Together, they convey *to be well pleasing* or *make good*.

Romans 8:8 also contains an infinitive form of this root verb, "**the ones existing in the flesh aren't choosing to be made able** (present tense, middle/passive)¹ **to please** (αρεσαι) *God*". This portion characterizes the reality of all unbelievers – apart from divine intervention, they "**aren't . . . able**" to *vigorously complete* (aorist, active) the act of making amends with God. This lesson combined with Hebrews 11:6 depicts the reflexive principle of mathematics: if 'a' = 'b' and 'b' = 'c', then 'a' = 'c'. So, since **unbelievers** can't "**please**" God and it's not possible to "**please**" Him without "**faith**", **Unbelievers Can't Generate "Faith"**. These simple statements add up to an astronomical truth.

Second Thessalonians 2:13-14

"Also, we're indebted to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren **having been loved** by the Lord, because God caused Himself to **choose** (middle voice)¹ you as first fruit (or "from the beginning" – textual difference) unto **salvation** in **sanctification** associated with the Spirit and **faith** associated with the truth, unto which He **called** you through our gospel, unto possession of the **glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There's a lot going on in this portion. Initially, Paul says he and his fellow ministers "**are indebted**" (οφειλομεν) or *obligated* to give thanks to God for these Christians. Why? Because *The One Who Called Them for Salvation* should

receive “**thanks**”, *appreciation*, or *gratitude* for His work (see 1:3). And how did He benefit them? He “**caused Himself to choose**” (εἰλατο – middle voice) them. This aorist indicative form of the verb “αἰρεω”, meaning *to take* or *seize*, indicates He *completed this act in past time* (cf. Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9). The usage of this term is virtually synonymous with “ἐκλεγω”, the verb commonly used to designate God’s *election* or *choice* of His children (Mark 13:20; Luke 6:13; 9:35; John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19; Acts 1:2; 13:17; 1 Cor. 1:27-28; Eph. 1:4; James 2:5).

The text goes on to indicate what we were chosen for; it was “**unto salvation**”, a transaction described by two adverbial phrases. First, this act was achieved “**in sanctification**” (ἐν αἰγιασμῷ) **associated with the Spirit**” (2 Thess. 2:13). This noun depicts a positional *setting apart* or *separation from sin* “**in Christ**” which is why God accepts us as “**holy**” (αἱγιουvs), “**blameless ones**”, and “**saints**” (αἱγιοις – Eph. 1:1, 3-4, cf. Rom. 11:16; Eph. 2:21; Phil. 4:21). This operation couldn’t originate with humans since we were stuck under the Devil’s “**will**” and practiced unrelenting rebellion by “**disobedience**” to God’s standards (Rom. 8:7-8; Eph. 2:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:26). So, the “**Spirit**” had to initiate this *Judicial Separation* when He “**elected**” us “**in Christ Jesus, who was made wisdom to us from God, both righteousness, sanctification and redemption**” (1 Cor. 1:27-30; 1 Pet. 1:2).

Second, God picked us for “**salvation in**” (ἐν), *within*, or *in the realm of* “**faith**” (πιστει) **associated with the truth**” (αληθειας – 2 Thess. 2:13). Note this rendering, for genitive nouns consistently express *association*, and most of the time Versions render this phraseology with ‘**of**’ to signify *affiliated possession*. The English word ‘of’ depicts a large portion of what this case represents so I too often render it this way or with the words *belonging to*. The KJV also translates this construct ‘belief **of** the truth’, and by doing so more accurately preserves *the foundational meaning*. Furthermore, the KJV generally renders other phrases consisting of the word “**faith**” followed by a genitive noun in this same way, a precedent set by both Wycliffe and Tyndale, then predominantly followed for centuries.¹³

However, almost all English Versions published over the past 70 years translate this construct ‘faith **in** the truth’ which *Tends to Bolster Support for the Idea Humans Can Produce Saving Faith* (see Rom. 3:22, 26; Gal. 2:16, 20; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9; Col. 2:12). This includes popular Translations such as NASV, NIV, NKJV and ESV. In these Versions, rare exceptions occur such as Romans 3:3 where most still read ‘faithfulness **of** God’ (πιστιν του θεου). Fortunately, sites like studybible.info provide access to older Translations that render constructions like this with the word ‘**of**’ irrespective to which Greek Edition they’re translated from (cf. Acts 3:16 – “**on the basis of the faith associated with His name**” [ἐπι τη πιστει του ονοματος αυτου]).

When this deduction is applied, rather than denoting we generate "faith" in the "truth", our "faith" is "associated with" the "truth" in similar fashion to how "sanctification" is "associated with" the "Spirit" (2 Thess. 2:13). Just like the Spirit is *the pertinent source of our holiness*, the truth is *the pertinent source of our faith*. Consequently, I think these phrases teach the "Spirit" makes God's elect holy in Christ when *He gives us "faith" affiliated with "the truth"* (cf. Rom. 10:14-17).¹⁴ To sum up this verse's thought, **During His Sanctifying Work at Salvation, "The Spirit" Uses Gospel "Truth" to Initiate Saving "Faith" in those "God Caused Himself to Choose"**.

Two additional statements which help define the election process are contained in this portion; we've "been loved by the Lord" and were "called" (2 Thess. 2:14). These features of God's purpose repetitively arise in contexts describing "election", so their relationship to this subject will be observed as they occur in coming passages from the Church Epistles.¹⁵

Romans 12:3

Directly following an appeal for believers to live a life of service to God, Paul states, "For, I say through the **grace** having been given to me to everyone being among you not to think above (ὑπερ + φρονεῖν) beyond what is necessary to think (φρονεῖν), but to think (φρονεῖν) unto the outcome to think soundly (σως + φρονεῖν) as, to each one, God has measured a measure of **faith**."

You can see this verse contains four infinitive forms of the verb "φρονεω", which means to "think" or *use the mind*. The first is combined with the preposition "ὑπερ" and signifies not to think in a manner "above" what we ought, for this practice allows *routine* (present tense) *pride* or *arrogance* to control our outlook. The last occurrence, prefixed by the noun "σως" which depicts *soundness*, specifies we're to *maintain* (present tense) *a spiritually healthy mindset*. Two more present infinitives rest between which *stress the need to retain a humble frame of mind* in the successful pursuit of Christian behavior.

What exactly is Paul proposing which can assist this conducive attitude while we seek to present our "bodies as a living, holy" and "acceptable sacrifice to God" (Rom. 12:1)? First, we're to put these exhortations into practice "through" His "mercies" (οἰκτιρμῶν). This noun ties in with its verb form "οἰκτιρῶ" which occurs twice in Romans 9:15 and details how God carries out His "purpose" by "showing mercy" (ἐλεωντος & ἐλεει – Greek synonyms, v. 16) to "vessels of mercy" (ἐλεους – 8:33; 9:11-24; 11:30-32). These "elect" Jews and gentiles are the same ones who've been "measured a measure of faith" (12:3).

After categorizing humanity as morally bankrupt, chapters 3 and 4 of Romans explain how we’ve become acceptable to God by being **“justified by faith”**. Chapters 5 – 8 teach how our position in and affiliation with Christ anchors victory over sin in the sanctification process. This section closes by introducing **“election”** and touching on our guaranteed glorification. Finally, chapters 9 – 11 **Teach the Elect are Ones Who’ll Receive God’s Mercy and Respond by “faith” to the Gospel** (cf. 2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:10).

Next, in the process of finalizing how God chose His **“remnant”** (λειμμα) **“according to election”**, Paul attaches the thought that God had **“measured”** (εμερισεν) **a measure of faith to each one** of these saved **“Jews”** and **“gentiles”** (Rom. 12:3 & 11:5, cf. 9:11, 24; 1 Cor. 7:16-17). This verb’s aorist indicative form points to *past completed action* when God gave us a **“measure”** or *needed quantity “of faith”* at the time of regeneration. When Christians realize we personally received saving **“faith”** based only on divine **“mercy”**, *It’s Easier to Maintain a Humble Mindset* concerning our redemption, growth, edifying ministry, and evangelism.

Colossians 2:11-12

The final passage of this section reads: **“and in whom you were circumcised in relation to a circumcision not-made-with-hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, after having been buried with Him in baptism; and in whom you were raised with Him through the faith associated with the operation of God, the one having raised Him (Jesus) out of the dead.”**

This spiritual **“circumcision”** happened to us following the aorist participial action, **“after having been buried with”** (συνταφεντες) Christ **“in baptism”**.⁷ Since, physical **“circumcision”** represented *separation from sin*, our Lord’s sinless lifestyle under the Law combined with His death on our behalf – His **“circumcision not-made-with-hands”** – **Accomplished a Judicial Parting from Sin which Allows Believers to Be Fully Acceptable to God** (Lev. 12:2-3; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 3:3; Heb. 4:15). At salvation, we assumed this position when the Spirit **“baptized”** us **“into His death”** by the **“one baptism”** (Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 4:5). Also, *This “Baptism” Activated Our Entrance into The “Body”* (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:27-28).

The next result of this **“baptism”** is **“you were raised with”** (συνηγεθητε) **Him**, which enables us to **“walk in newness of life”** (Rom. 6:4; 7:6). Prior to redemption, we were morally **“dead in transgressions and sins”** (Eph. 2:1). Afterward, we’re no longer enslaved to sin but positioned to **“walk in the Spirit”**, **“as if living out of the dead”**, and able to **“present”** ourselves **“as instruments of righteousness to God”** (Rom. 6:6, 12-16; Gal. 5:16-18). Tying these thoughts to

the topic at hand, *We Entered This Resurrection-Powered Life* "through the faith associated with the operation of God" (Col. 2:11-12).

This phrase is grammatically identical to the one just covered, "faith associated with the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). For, "faith" (πιστεως) is followed by a genitive noun, which means it's **of** or "associated with" God's "operation" (ενεργειας), *working*, or *energizing*. Again, most older Versions render this phrase 'faith **of** the operation (or 'working') of God', and most newer Ones read 'faith **in** His efforts which permits the idea that saving "faith" originates from us. However, when correctly represented, the grammar specifies **We were Circumcised at Our "Baptism" by "the Faith" which has Its Associated Source or Affiliated Base in God's "Operation"**.

One final thought, take note of the phrases "in whom" (εν ω) and "in Him" (εν αυτω – Col. 2:10-12). Combine their adverbial sense with the passive voice action words they modify: "having been filled", "were circumcised", and "were raised with", which imply *the underlying external force of deity*. Then, compare this grammar with the just concluded exposition of Ephesians 1:4 & 13. It's apparent these passages teach similar truths: "in Christ" the elect are "made alive with Him", after being "raised", "circumcised", and "filled" with the "fullness of" His "deity". *As Occupants of Christ's Holiness, We're Entirely Acceptable to God* (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:4; 2:4-5; Col. 2:9-13). How astonishing is that!

Section 3: Passages Describing Election

To complete this study, features of "election" will be identified and developed by probing key portions which define the celestial campaign. These segments are categorized according to three aspects of God's "purpose": Determinations in eternity past, how His decisions play out in the annals of time, and objectives reached by these undertakings.

- - Pre-Creation Activity - -

Romans 8:28-30

"Also (δε), because we know to those who continuously **love** God, He works all things in the direction of good to those who continuously exist as **called ones** according to *His purpose*. And, because, who He **foreknew** He **predestined** as conformed ones associated with the image of His Son unto the outcome for Him to be firstborn among many brethren; and also (δε) who He **predestined**, these He **called**, and who He **called**, these He **justified**; and also (δε) who He

justified, these He glorified.” To gain an accurate perspective of verses 29 and 30, it’s necessary to solidify a few points in verse 28. Then, after considering the last two verses, we’ll double back to calculate how that truth influences the meaning of the first verse.

Initially, the noun **“called ones”** (κλητοις) defines *those summoned to salvation* (v. 30). As more passages containing forms of this term are evaluated, it’ll become evident *They Represent A Component of God Drawing The “elect” to Himself* (**nouns:** Rom. 1:1, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:1-2, 24, 26; **verbs:** Rom. 8:30; 9:7, 12, 24-26; 1 Cor. 1:9; 7:15-24; Gal. 1:6, 15; Eph. 4:1, 4; 2 Thess. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Another significant noun is the word **“purpose”** (προθεσιν – Rom. 8:28). This term combines the preposition “προ”, which conveys the idea of *before*, with the noun “θεσις” signifying *a placed thing*.¹⁶ Our English word ‘thesis’ is derived from this noun and refers to *a submitted proposal*. Similarly, God **Previously Set Forth His Plan for Redemption**, He *Placed it Out Beforehand*, then operates **“according to”** (κατα) or *in line with* this **Published Blueprint**.

Regarding *Salvation and Redemption*, “προθεσις” occurs in Romans 9:11, Ephesians 1:11 & 3:11, and Second Timothy 1:9 which affirms, **“God . . . has saved and called us with reference to a holy calling, not according to our works but according to (κατα) His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times”**. Likewise, it’s verb is used with reference to revealed **“mystery”** truth which *Explains All Aspects of His Current Plan including the Justification of Sinners* (Rom. 3:25; 5:9-11; 16:25-26; Eph. 1:9-10; 4:24; Col. 1:24 – 2:3).

Allied with this **“purpose”** for the **“called ones”**, the conjunction **“also”** (δε) is noted in the above translation. Not only does this term *connect words or thoughts* like the most common conjunction **“and”** (και) but *it anticipates additional content*. Here, it separates aspects of God’s **“purpose”** into distinct timeframes. The initial “δε” creates a parenthesis which envelopes verse 28 with His foreknowing and predestining – *movements in eternity past*. Its second appearance sets apart His acts of calling and justifying which *transpire in real-time conversion*. The third “δε” sections off God’s future act of glorifying when the **“elect”** ultimately become **“conformed ones”** to **“the image of His Son”** (vv. 29-30, 33).

Besides these designations, this section contains another linguistic abnormality. The verbs **“foreknew”**, **“predestined”**, **“called”**, **“justified”** and **“glorified”** all exist in aorist indicative form which means *these acts were completed*. We humans tend to think of these events taking place at different intervals of time. However, the grammar suggests God can and does visualize these as *accomplished activities*.

Based on this unique attribute, from "before eternal times" and "according to His purpose" He deems the "called ones" as already occupying eventual "glory" (Rom. 8:18, 21, 28, 30; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Accordingly, these verses *Present Redemption as Secure* because it's founded on the enacted plan of God; *Our Salvation is Guaranteed* since it's rooted in His Omniscience and Omnipotence. That's why the text proceeds, "who will bring a charge against the elect (εκλεκτων) of God? God is the one who justifies" (Rom. 8:33). Then, verses 37-39 read, "we more than conquer through the one having loved us, for I have been persuaded that . . . no . . . created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord". We too are part of creation, thus, even we can't alter this celestial bond of "love".

The Manifold "Love" of God

The latter part of Romans 8 was written to describe how the Father's movements place and preserve His "elect . . . in Christ Jesus". This portion explicitly teaches our eternal destination stands secure since every aspect of salvation is an offshoot of heavenly "love" (αγαπη – vv. 35, 39). Strengthening this idea, the aorist participle, "the one having loved (αγαπησαντος)⁷ us", stipulates we received *this charity* which enables us to *routinely* (present tense) "more than conquer" or *experience victory* amid persecution (v. 37, cf. 8:18-27). To summarize, His previously endowed "love" toward the "elect" germinates a "faith" response to the gospel then cradles "those who continuously love" (αγαπωσιν) God" and "continuously exist (ουσιν) as" His "called ones" (present participles in v. 28, cf. Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4-5, 13; Phil. 1:28-29; 1 Tim. 1:13-14).

That being said, divine "love" is multi-faceted with regard to salvation. One widely understood component was shown when God sent His Son to pay the penalty for all sin, laying the basis for men to be freed from eternal judgement (John 3:16; Rom. 1:16; 5:18-19; 1 John 2:2). However, redemption only takes effect when a person receives this payment (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 3:23-25; 5:17; 10:9-10; 2 Thess. 2:10-12). Positing the fact the Lost are "blinded", held captive under the Devil's "will", and stuck in a state of wicked-"spirit"-prompted "disobedience", *How Can Anyone Believe?* (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:26)

It's possible because the Word teaches **Exercising "Faith" Results from being God's "Elect" Who've Received an Additional Aspect of Divine "Love"** (Rom. 8:33-35, 37, 39; 9:11-13; Eph. 1:4-5; 2:4-9; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:13-14). In conclusion, God extended *A General Kind of "love"* by providing a way for all men to be saved. Also, *He Gave an Extra "measure" of "love" to*

The Chosen which enables us to place **"faith"** in Jesus' perfect sacrifice (Rom. 12:3; Heb. 10:14).

God's Foreknowledge

Now let's return to the exposition of Romans 8:28-30 and focus on the statement God **"foreknew"** who would **"believe"** the gospel. Some hold the concept that God previously knew who would exercise faith, yet this reality in no way violates man's free choice in the matter. However, this stance isn't verified in N.T. contexts which discuss His 'foreknowledge' or 'foreknowing'. So, let's analyze the portions this term appears in to understand how this attribute in God's Nature functions in reference to redemption.

First, this section states God **"foreknew"** (προεγνων) the **"called ones"** (Rom. 8:28-29). This verb unites the preposition "προ", meaning *before*, with the verb "γινωσκω", which portrays *knowing with a sense of understanding or being aware of*.¹⁷ Then, this term is followed by the verbs **"predestined"** and **"called"**, activities also accomplished by the Father. Then, it occurs alongside phraseology such as His **"purpose"** and **"the elect of God"** (vv. 28-29, 33). This contextual affiliation implies *He carried out these acts in conjunction with His foreknowledge*.

Also, this term is used when Paul says, **"God didn't push aside His people who He foreknew"** (προεγνων), a statement which is applied to his own salvation plus that of Elijah and 7000 more in that historical timeframe (Rom. 11:1-4). Immediately, these examples are linked with God's **"remnant"** who're saved based on **"election associated with grace"** and not human **"works"** (vv. 5-6). This context also *couples God's foreknowledge with other terms explaining how He "calls" individuals* (cf. Rom. 9:6-13). Additional occurrences of this verb refer to humanity's 'foreknowledge' but, unlike God, men can't cause anything to happen by our premonitions (Acts 26:5; 2 Pet. 3:17).

Next, its participial form defines how *God foreknew Christ would shed His blood to redeem man "before the creation of the world"* (προεγνωσμενου – 1 Pet. 1:18-20). To corroborate this teaching, its noun appears in Acts 2:23, **"in reference to God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge"** (προγνωσει), **this one** (Jesus) **was given up through the hand of the lawless, who you killed after having fastened Him to the cross"**. Both portions *conclusively tie God's foreknowledge to Christ's payment for sin* (Acts 3:20-21; Rom. 3:23-25; Heb. 9:22-26).

This noun appears one final time regarding Jewish believers who're labeled the **"elect . . . according to the foreknowledge"** (προγνωσιν) **of God** and **"in sanctification associated with the Spirit"** (1 Pet. 1:1-2; cf. 2 Thess. 2:13). Again,

the **"elect"** (εκλεχτοις) and *The Spirit's Work* are linked to Divine **"foreknowledge"**. After considering all available data surrounding this term, it signifies: **God's Foreknowledge is Inseparably Bonded to His "purpose" and "will" as well as His Decisions to Make, Predestine, Choose, Call, and Justify "vessels of mercy"** (Rom. 8:28-29, 33; 9:11, 20-21, 23-24; Eph. 1:4-6, 11). In essence, *God's Foreknowledge of Events Governs the Certainty They'll Take Place.*

Now let's revisit Romans 8:28. Like any passage, we should apply it based on contextual relationships. In 8:15-39, Paul explains Body members **"received the Spirit"**, can handle sufferings as **"sons of God"**, are the Father's **"heirs"**, and possess the **"hope"** of being **"gloried with"** Christ. These guarantees are secure because we're His **"called ones"** and **"elect"**, thus no one can **"separate us from"** His **"love"**. Consequently, *Verses 28-30 Exist in A Context Which Specifies How We're Saved.* So, there's no reason to interpret the phrase **"all things"** in verse 28 to include any part of our Christian sanctification process.

For, Romans 6:12 – 8:14 details our post-salvation lifestyle of putting off **"sin"** and putting on **"righteousness"**. Later, chapter 12 picks up with further instruction about incorporating Christ's qualities. Between these portions, chapters 8:15 – 11:36 *Serve as A Literary Interlude* which explains how God predetermined, positioned, and guarded His **"elect"** to occupy a regenerate state wherein we're now able to **"walk in newness of life"** (Rom. 6:1-6; 7:4-6; Gal. 5:16). Accordingly, **The Famous Romans 8:28 Phrase, "He works all things in the direction of good", should be Confined to The Celestially Coordinated Stages of Salvation and Not Extended to Events in Our Christian "walk".**

In the future Kingdom, God's elect will be divinely empowered and caused to do good works. In contrast, today Christians are responsible for how we react to each challenge with the foundation of knowing God **"made"** us **"alive with Christ"**, provides direction in His Word, and affords infinite **"power"** through the indwelling **"Spirit"** to understand and obey these dictates (Ezek. 36:26-31; 37:23; Zeph. 3:12-13; Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 2:4-5; 3:1-19; 5:15-21).

Ephesians 1:4-6

"According as He caused Himself to choose us in Him before the creation of the world for us to continually be holy and blameless ones in His presence after having predestined us in love unto son-position through Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good thinking of His will unto the praise of the glory associated with His grace which He graced us with in the beloved."

These verses make up the first section of an amazing opening paragraph which describes the heavenly, spiritual blessings we possess **"in Christ"** (v. 3). At the forefront, Paul writes, **"He caused Himself to choose"** (ἐξελεξατο) **us.** This verb literally means *to speak out* and is well translated *to choose, select, pick, or elect*. Also, its middle voice indicates *God acted upon Himself* to **"choose us"**. And its aorist indicative form specifies this act *was completed in past time* which is pinpointed as **"before the creation of the world"**.

Next, the phrase **"for us to continually be"** (εἶναι) **holy and blameless ones in His presence** discloses God's desired *outcome* in this matter. For, the infinitive form of this verb of being conveys the Father's pre-creation vision of our *resultant essence or presence*, which is **"holy and blameless"**. Some Versions translate the phrase **'that we should be** holy and blameless' which allows for thinking this verse teaches *we ought to work on our holiness after conversion* (Rom. 6:12-22). Instead, the grammar indicates **The Resultant Continual Existence** (present infinitive) **of Being "Holy and Blameless" Materialized the Moment God Elected Us "in Christ"** (Rom. 3:24-26; 8:33; Eph. 1:3-4). Translations more accurately representing the Greek text are listed in these footnotes.^{18, 19}

Before proceeding, I think it's necessary to counter a theological hypothesis currently being promoted in conjunction with Ephesians 1:4. This concept is commonly labeled **'Corporate Election'** and asserts God chose a group of people prior to creation then, over time, unbelievers by 'Free Will' exercise faith in Christ and become members of that group. In other words, this view claims the Lost can generate faith which places man, not God, in the driver's seat of conversion.

First, Scripture covered so far doesn't support the idea people can trust in Jesus apart from prior divine intervention, for multiple passages show saving **"faith"** is given to God's **"elect"** in accord with His predeterminate **"will"**. Second, this interpretation contradicts the teaching of this context, for Ephesians 1:13 ties those who effectively *hear and believe* the gospel with the ones *chosen* **"in Him"** prior to creation (1:4). Third, advocates of this belief ignore portions that unmistakably prove *God Selects Individuals for Salvation* (Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:1 [Paul]; Acts 16:14-15 [Lydia]; Rom. 9:7-9 [Issac]; Rom. 9:10-13 [Jacob]; and Rom. 11:1-7 [Elijah and 7000 others]). Sadly, this is just another philosophical attempt to get believers to turn a blind eye from simple truths in the Word.

Moving on Paul writes, **"after having predestined"** (προορισας) **us** (Eph. 1:5). This aorist participle indicates God *accomplished this act before* He chose us, which is why it's rendered **"after having"**.⁷ This term is composed of the preposition "προ", which means *before*, affixed to the verb "ορίζω", signifying *to designate*.

Our word 'horizon' is derived from its root which symbolizes *a line of demarcation* or *separation* between land/water and sky. Combined with "προ", both noun and verb forms convey *prior designation, determination beforehand* or *foreordaining*. With reference to redemption, it appears three more times, then twice more with different subject matter which help confirm this meaning (Rom. 8:29, 30; Eph. 1:11; cf. Acts 4:28; 1 Cor. 2:7). At least seven Versions adequately translate this participle plus provide a good rendition of verse 4.¹⁸

This foreordination happened **"through Jesus Christ unto"** (εἰς), *in the direction of*, or *for* the Father **"Himself"** as well as **"unto"** (εἰς) our **"son-position"** (Eph. 1:5). These prepositional phrases have the adverbial function of describing how God carried out predestination *in a manner directed toward* **"Himself"** and **"son-position"** (υιοθεσιαν). This noun is often translated 'adoption as sons' which is exactly what happened when we **"were baptized into Christ"**, God's **"Son"** and **"seed"** when the Spirit initiated us into the **"body"** as *divine family members* (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:16, 19-29). The term "υιοθεσια" occurs five times, once in reference to O.T. elect of Israel, and the rest pertain to Jews and gentiles in the Church (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5).

In Romans 8:15, this *sonship* is contextually coupled with the idea the Father **"predestined"** us **"as conformed ones associated with the image of His Son"** (v. 29). Between these two verses, additional language links our **"son-position"** with the **"hope"** of **"the revelation of the sons of God"** and being **"glorified with"** Him. That event includes **"the redemption of our body"** and **"freedom associated with the glory"** (vv. 17-24). Meditating upon and internalizing these tremendous promises enables us to **"wait for"** them **"through endurance"** (v. 25).

Returning to Ephesians 1:5, four additional prepositional phrases serve an adverbial function to describe the act of predestination. First, God undertook this **"in love"** (εν αγαπη). Since He foreordained **"us"** *in this beneficial manner*, **"love"** was a motivator behind predestination just like His practice of **"election"** (Rom. 8:35, 37, 39; 9:11-13; Eph. 2:4-9; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:13-14). The next adverbial combo indicates He foreordained us **"for son-position through Jesus Christ"** (δια Ιησου Χριστου). This modifying phrase refers to redemption procured by His death and resurrection which allowed God to accept us as **"holy and blameless"** children (Rom. 3:25-26; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11; Eph. 1:4).

The third phrase describing foreordination is **"according to the good thinking"** (κατα την ευδοκιαν) **of His will"** (Eph. 1:5). This blend of terms conveys the idea God's saving work toward us was *in keeping with His favorable plan* and directed by His **"will"** (θεληματος – cf. v. 9; Gal. 1:15).

In reference to salvation, God's "will" is alluded to in a two-dimensional way, much like His "love". For, *in an indeterminate manner*, He "wills" (θελει, or "desires") **all men to be saved and come unto a full knowledge of the truth**. This act is in line with extending *common* "love" to address all men's sin (1 Tim. 2:4, cf. John 3:16; 2 Thess. 2:10). But also, He dispensed *an extra aspect of* "love" to His chosen which is like how *an additional facet of His* "will" (θελημα) functions behind the elect's belief in the gospel (John 1:13; 6:38-40; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 10:10, **verb forms**: John 5:21; Rom. 9:16, 18, 22). In each context, adjacent language specifies whether His "love" and "will" should be understood in a **Causal** or **Non-Causal Sense**.

The fourth adverbial modifier is "unto the praise associated with the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:6). This indicates He pre-arranged our future "unto" (εις), *in the direction of*, or *for* the "praise" (επαινον), *approval*, or *commendation* "associated with" His "glory". And all of this from an outpouring of His *Unmerited Favor* or "grace". At the end of the day, **God is a Jealous God who Wants and Deserves Recognition for What He's Done, Is Doing, and Will Do**. Studying, believing, applying and teaching the revelation He's made known about His "purpose" in redemption are avenues we can take to recognize *The Sonship Position* procured for us (vv. 9, 11). So, let's seek to propagate our role as celestial sons which will help us inch closer to "praise" His "glory" (δοξης) as others *perceive divine traits represented in* our disposition (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14, cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

One final observation. The accusative pronoun "us" (ημας) appears four times in this passage and depicts "us" as *objects*, the recipients of "His grace" (χαριτος) **which He graced** (εχαριτωσεν) **us with in the beloved** (Eph. 1:4-6). These providential benefits are based in *unmerited favor* flowing from His "will", "good thinking" and "love", features which motivated Him to *predestine* and *choose* us to be "holy and blameless" sons "through Jesus Christ", His "beloved" Son.

-- Election in Real Time --

First Corinthians 1:18-31

This extended passage begins, "For, indeed, the message of the cross exists as **foolishness** to those choosing to be made to end in ruin, also it exists as the **power** of God to those choosing to be **saved**".¹

Here Paul utilizes two participles in dual voice form to explain how people react to the gospel. The first one, "those choosing to be made to end in ruin"

(απολλυμενοις), refers to folks who *act on themselves* (middle) **"to be made"** (passive) *by an outside force* to **"end in ruin"** or eternal *devastation*. This rejection parallels the previously covered response which should be expected from the Lost who *continuously* (present tense), *volitionally* and *enthusiastically* refuse Christ since they're *controlled by an evil energy* which holds them **"captive"** to Satan's **"will"** (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:26).

The second, **"those choosing to be saved"** (σωζομενοις) depicts folks who *continuously* (present tense) *act upon themselves* (middle voice) to accept Christ's payment because of *divine intervention* (passive – cf. 2 Cor. 2:14-17). Their *realization of sin* and *exuberant reception* corresponds with portions which show **How the Spirit Enlightens Men** to see past the Devil's blinding effect **and Prompts Them to Believe** (Acts 13:48; 16:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Phil. 1:28-29; 1 Tim. 1:14). The rest of this chapter *Provides Insight* for why these opposing responses to the gospel occur.

Initially, the Lost perceive the **"cross"** as **"foolishness"** (μωρια), the first of six times this term contributes significant meaning to the tone of this context (1 Cor. 1:20-21, 23, 25, 27). Our vivid English equivalent describes how the world views redemption as *moron-ish* or just plain *stupid*. In contrast, the **"called"** recognize Jesus' sacrifice **"exists as"** (εστιν), *is*, or *substantially represents* God's **"power"** (δυναμις) or *dynamo*, which the **"Spirit"** uses to spawn **"faith"** (v. 24; Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:13-14).

In support of this premise, Paul draws upon **Isaiah 29:14**, **"for it has been written, 'I will ruin the wisdom of the wise, and I will dismiss the understanding of those who understand'"** (1 Cor. 1:19). This verse specifies God **"will ruin"** or *devastate* the **"wisdom"** (σοφια), *cleverness*, or *skill* of those who think they're **"wise"**.²⁰ Based on this Greek term, the favorable name *Sophia* depicts *one who correctly responds to truth*. This verse teaches unbelievers can't come to God through their **"wisdom"** since, simultaneously, *by His own skill* He'll **"dismiss"** their *foolish conclusions* and *lifestyle*. It's noteworthy part of **Isaiah 29:13-16** is also quoted in the narrative about **"election"** in Romans 9:19-21. Also, this is the first two of seven times the nouns **"wise"** and **"wisdom"** make their impact in this chapter.

Now, Paul challenges the Corinthian's perception, **"Where is the wise one? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has God made foolish the wisdom of the world? – 'yes'"** (1 Cor. 1:20). These questions imply if they analyze a cross-section of members in their assembly, they'll *Detect a Significantly Lower Proportion of Intelligentsia or Privileged* than exist on average in society. This thought is augmented by the last question which indicates God has **"made foolish"** the world's **"wisdom"** since it contains the negative **"ουχι"**,

specifying a positive response.²¹ So, **"yes", Part of God's "purpose" is to Expose the "foolish" in the Human Race by Not Choosing an Equal Number of the Elite** (vv. 26-31; cf. Rom. 8:28-30; 9:11).

Paul further develops this thought, "For now, based upon if in the **wisdom** of God, the world didn't know God through the **wisdom**, God was well pleased through the **foolishness** of preaching to **save** those who **believe**" (1 Cor. 1:21). This verse communicates "if . . . God was well pleased through the **foolishness** of preaching to save those who believe", He certainly could. And He did take this route "based upon . . . the **wisdom**" (τη σοφία), His "**wisdom**", and "through the **wisdom**" (της σοφίας), also His "**wisdom**", "the world didn't know" Him.

The KJV and ESV correctly render this phrase, but other commonly used Translations render the second occurrence, 'through **its** wisdom'. This reading implies the world's wisdom is meant by the second use of "σοφία" though no pronoun exists in the Greek text to support this translation. Based on the absence of a pronoun plus the fact both nouns occur with an article and the first is designated to "**God**", I think the intent is "through" His "**wisdom**" God devised a means of salvation which He knew *the perishing* would consider "**foolishness**" (μωρίας) and then reject (1 Cor. 1:18, 23). With this objective in mind, the opening term of this verse, "**now, based upon if**" (επειδη), means: "**if**" (ει) God established *this condition* to humiliate men "**based upon**" (επι – preposition) *His wisdom*, "**now**" (δη – a particle) He's accomplished this goal.²²

This same term begins verses 22-23, "**and now, based upon if** (επειδη) **Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom**, also we preach Christ having been crucified, *which indeed is a scandal to Jews also foolishness to gentiles* (or "Greeks" – textual difference). So, "**now . . . if**" Jews function "**based upon . . . signs**" and Greeks seek human "**wisdom**", **Then** these profiles, both of which are true, set them up to reject *A Crucified and Resurrected Christ*. Therefore, God formulated this salvation message knowing it would be viewed as *a stumbling block* by secular Jews, who saw Jesus as an imposter, and "**foolishness**" (μωριαν) by Lost gentiles. Basically, this section expands on the reasoning raised in verse 21.

But wait, there's a third group, "**also, to the called ones themselves, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and wisdom of God**" (1 Cor. 1:24). Those labelled "**called ones**" consist of individual "**Jews**" and "**Greeks**" **Who Were Hand-Picked by God** and, through no ability of their own, gladly chose "**Christ**" instead of concluding the cross is "**foolishness**" (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15, 28-29; 1 Cor. 1:26-28; Eph. 1:4-5). This development places divine "**power**" and "**wisdom**" as *Foundational Components of Redemption* (cf. Rom. 9:24-30; 10:19-20). So, why did God offer salvation by using a method men consider irrational?

"Because" it proves "the foolishness (μωρον) of God is wiser (σοφωτερον) than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25).

From here on out, sociological answers are provided for the questions posed in verse 20, "For, brethren, look at your calling, because not many wise ones exist according to the flesh, not many powerful ones exist, not many of good birth exist" (1 Cor. 1:26). To provide background information in support of the storyline, this verse begins with the conjunction "for" (γαρ). Then, it adds a present imperative verb "look" (βλεπετε) to demand the Corinthians place consistent focus on fellow assembly members to consider their former secular affiliations. This is followed by the conjunction "because" (οτι) to zero in on the reason their church contained just a few of the high and mighty.

While assessing their comrades, they observed there weren't "many wise ones (σοφοι) or intellectually skilled "according to the flesh". Also, they didn't see "many powerful ones" (δυνατοι), influencers or dominant persons. Nor could they spot "many of good birth" (ευγενεις), noble, or the privileged. Next, Paul discloses why the fabric of the Body of Christ consists of a small percentage of the upper class. "But God caused Himself to elect (εξελεξατο – middle voice) the foolish things of the world in order that He might customarily discredit the wise, and God caused Himself to elect (εξελεξατο) the weak things of the world in order that He might customarily discredit the strong" (1 Cor. 1:27).¹

In no uncertain terms, this middle voice verb is repeated to declare "God" Acted upon "Himself to elect", Pick or Choose People Who Represent the Lower Class. And this technique was used "in order that" (ινα) or for the purpose that He "might customarily discredit" (καταισχυνη – present tense) those society celebrates as "wise" or "strong". This term unites the preposition "κατα", conveying the idea of down, with the verb "αισχυνω", meaning to disfigure or make ugly; and together they're generally rendered 'to make ashamed'.²³ Subjunctive verbs require a condition to occur if their action is to happen. So here, God's Distinct Act of Selecting Foolish and Weak Down-Casts fulfills The Condition that He "might . . . discredit", shame-down, or debunk the thought: Fallen Men, By Their Own "wisdom", Can Muster a Positive Response to The "foolish" Message of The Cross.

This line of reasoning continues in verse 28, "and God caused Himself to elect (εξελεξατο) the low-born of the world and the despised, the things not being, in order that He might neutralize the things being so that no flesh might boast in the presence of God" (1 Cor. 1:28-29).¹ The noun "low-born" (α + γενη) means lacking birth and contrasts with the word "good birth" (ευ + γενεις) in verse 26,

which describes culture’s upper crust. Then, the downtrodden in verses 27-28 are given one final designation – **“the things not being”** (τα μη ουσια).

This present tense participle (ουσια) of the verb of being portrays *enduring essence* or *substance*. Applied to the narrative, this three-term phrase indicates most of the **“elect”** do **“not”** (μη) *have substantial worth “according to the flesh”*, that is, in the world’s estimation. But *God Turned the Table by Choosing Misfits “in order that He might neutralize the things being”* (τα ουσια) – *those thought to have substantial worth or importance* based on societal **“wisdom”**. The verb **“He might neutralize”** (καταργηση) is the same term in First Corinthians 13:8 which specifies the gifts of **“prophecy”** and **“knowledge”** will *be deactivated, neutralized, or stop operating* (**same verb**: Rom. 3:3, 31; 6:6; 7:6; 1 Cor. 6:13; 13:10-11; 15:24; 2 Cor. 3:7, 11, 13-14, 17; 2 Tim. 1:10).

In answer to the question, **‘Who saves?’**, God’s intent is to **“neutralize”** or **Stop any Thought that Worldly Education or Intelligence, Social Standing, Financial Wealth, or Human Power, has Anything to Do with Trusting in Christ**. To deflate this rational, He created and **elected “vessels”** to inhabit the underclass **“so that no flesh might boast”** (χαυχησεται) in His **“presence”** (Rom. 9:19-24; 1 Cor. 1:28). This section’s third subjunctive verb signals God hand-picked His children *As the Condition to Show No Act of Human Volition or Exertion Plays Any Part in Salvation*. Therefore, He alone has the right to **“boast”**, *brag* or *gloat* (Rom. 3:27; 4:2; 9:15-18; Eph. 2:8-9).

After recording how God eliminated human value-judgments in redemption, Paul adds, **“Also, out of Him you exist in Christ Jesus, who was made wisdom to us from God, both righteousness and holiness and redemption”** (1 Cor. 1:30). The phrase **“out of Him”** (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) specifies **God is The Source Who Placed the Elect “in Christ Jesus”**. As covered earlier, regeneration doesn’t materialize **“out (ἐκ) of”** our **“will”** but **“out”** (ἐκ) of God’s (John 1:12-13; Rom. 9:15-18; 11:5-7; Eph. 2:8-9). Furthermore, this verse states we **“exist”** (εἶτε – present tense) or *occupy our ongoing state “in Christ . . . from”* (ἀπο) or *rising from* the Person of **“God”** (1 Cor. 1:30). Therefore, these truths combine with the remaining text to indicate *Our Current and Substantial Worth is Equated With the Lord’s “wisdom”* (1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3), **“righteousness”** (Rom. 10:4; Phil. 3:9), **“holiness”** (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2), and **“redemption”** (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7).

Closing the chapter, **Jeremiah** is cited to reiterate a central aim in God’s practice of election, **“in order that according as it has been written, ‘Let the one who boasts (καυχωμενος) boast (καυχασθω) in the Lord’”** (1 Cor. 1:31; Jer. 9:22-23). Here, the term which first appears in verse 29 is repeated two more times to place a triple emphasis on this part of *The Divine Agenda*: When it comes to

saving men, **God Expects and Deserves All the Credit – Total Bragging Rights** (1 Cor. 3:18-23; 4:6-7).

-- More Goals Achieved Via Election --

Romans 9

Historically, in reference to "**election**", this context is the most cited and for good reason, since no other portion features such a comprehensive angle on how and why God saves men. Paul's approach was prompted by questions from fellow-Jews about why he hadn't patterned his ministry around them instead of gentiles. In the reply, the Spirit had him recount God's past dealings with Israel, what He's currently accomplishing with both Jews and gentiles, and what He'll do in the future to fulfill His "**purpose**" (Rom. 8:28-30, 33; 9:11-12). For the sake of brevity, this exposition majors in content which contributes to the subject at hand.

After Paul expresses feeling "**great grief and unceasing pain in**" his "**heart**" over unsaved Jewish brethren, in part from the impact of his former opposition to "**Christ**", he begins answering his detractors. "**Because also, it is not the sort of reality the word of God has failed, for not all those out of Israel, these exist as Israel**" (Rom. 9:1-2, 6). Initially, he wants to put to rest the view: **Since Israel was God's Chosen Nation, All Its Members are His Elect Children**. Paul attains this goal by specifying not everyone who physically descended from "**Israel**" – Jacob's nickname and his offspring's National Identity – *Comprise The Redeemed of "Israel"* (Gen. 32:28). Otherwise, God's stated objectives in His "**word**" would've "**failed**" or *collapsed*.

The text proceeds to support this premise, "**Because also, not all Abraham's seed are children, but 'In Issac the seed will be called in reference to you', that is, not the children of the flesh, these are children of God, but the children of promise are considered for seed**" (Rom. 9:7-8, cf. Gen. 21:12). This suggests God insured Abraham and Sarah's ill-conceived plan of birthing a child according to the "**flesh**" with Hagar (Ishmael) wouldn't be the catalyst to fulfill His *guarantee* they'd become a great Nation. Even after this monumental mistake, God kept His "**promise**" to multiply Abraham's "**seed**" by miraculously overcoming reproductive impotence and causing the birth of Isacc as His "**called**" heir (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:17-19; 18:10-14; Rom. 9:9).

Regarding the next generation of God-ordained "**seed**", Isaac and Rebekka conceived twins (Rom. 9:10). "**For not yet having been born, also not having practiced anything good or evil, in order that the purpose of God might continuously remain according to election, not out of works but out of the one**

who calls, it was said to her that 'The greater (Esau, the first born) **will serve the lessor**' (Jacob), **just as it has been written, 'I loved Jacob and I hated Esau'**" (vv. 11-13, cf. Gen. 25:23; Mal. 1:2-3). This portion graphically teaches "**out of the one who calls**" (the Father), *in line with* "**election**" (His choice), and *to fulfill* His "**purpose**", *God picked Jacob* to be His "**seed**" though Esau was the eldest and rightful heir according to the "**flesh**" (Rom. 9:8).

To illustrate the "**election**" of Jacob wasn't based on merit, this verse states God *Picked* him prior to birth, before he had a chance to do "**good or evil . . . works**". Then, the quote from **Genesis** combined with one from **Malachi** spell out a related component of "**election**"; God "**loved Jacob**", that is, *Extended an Extra Aspect of "love" which Made him His "seed"* (cf. Rom. 8:28, 35, 37, 39; Eph. 2:4-5; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:10-14; 1 Tim. 1:14). Furthermore, **The Phrase "out (εκ) of the one who calls" Designates God as the Source of This Redemption**, which is the same lesson taught in John 1:12-13 and Ephesians 2:8-9. For, all three contexts stress salvation isn't initiated "**out (εκ) of the will of man**" because it's not "**out (εξ) of works**" (Rom. 11:5-7; 1 Cor. 1:30).

Finally, to express the *Reason God Selected Jacob* in this fashion, the conjunction "**in order that**" (ινα) is used (Rom. 9:11). This *term of intent* is followed by a present subjunctive verb which indicates God operated sovereignly that His "**purpose . . . might continuously remain**" (μενη) or *may endlessly persist* "**according to**" (κατα) or *in line with* "**election**" (εκλογην). Merging this grammar conveys: To execute His "**purpose**" (προθεσις) or *plan*, **God's Personal Choice is The Sole Factor Determining Who's "called" as His "seed"** (v. 7).

"Therefore, what shall we say? Does **unrighteousness exist** with God? – 'no'. **Let there be no possibility!**" (Rom. 9:14). This verse begins with the conjunction "**therefore**" (ουν) which signals *a deduction or conclusion* is forthcoming. Note how Paul gets people to think along with him by voicing, "**what shall we say?**" Then, he asks if "**unrighteousness**" (αδικια), *a wrong which causes injury or injustice*, exists in God's Dealings. This issue is central to the Book of Romans and was first addressed in 3:1-8. That portion raises the question: **Can God's "righteousness" legitimately be compared with man's**, then *Quickly Discredits This Thought as Ridiculous*. However, this portion speaks to the point on an elevated level since it **Questions Whether these Recorded Acts of God (9:6-13) Exhibit Proper Character – If His Performance is Acceptable!**

To make sure everyone knows this line-of-questioning is inappropriate, Paul unequivocally states there's no way the transactions just chronicled represent any trace of "**unrighteousness**" or *injustice*. First, the phrase "**Let there be no possibility**" (μη γενοιτο) combines the negative "μη" with an optative form of

“γίνομαι”, which means *to come into existence*. Basically, this phrase specifies *the question of whether God could be wrong* (the contextual subject) has “no” *potential* or “**possibility**” (optative mode) to be true since *the subject causes itself* (middle voice) *to complete* (aorist tense) the concept His actions can’t *materialize* (verb of being) as unrighteous. In essence, this verbiage shuns the thought God could do something immoral and implies *This Idea is An Affront to His Nature*.

Furthermore, the question, “**Is there unrighteousness with God? – ‘no’ (μη)?**” answers itself since it contains the adverb “μη” which infers an *expected negative answer*.²¹ Therefore, this verse contains a strong double denial designating there’s absolutely “**no possibility**” the sinful condition of “**unrighteousness**” can accompany His behavior. Based on this conclusion, Paul proceeds to present rationale endorsing the thought God can do what He wants with humanity and ultimately establishes the point: **Whatever He Does is Right**.

Justifying God’s Movements

To defend this flat denial that “**unrighteousness**” characterizes anything God does, **Exodus 33:19** is cited to show His acts are carefully calculated to carry out His “**purpose**”. “**For, He says to Moses, ‘I will show mercy (ελεησω) to whoever I might show mercy (ελεω), and I will show compassion to whoever I might show compassion’**” (Rom. 9:15). Consistent with Hebrew writing which often stresses a principle by using two similar statements, the synonyms “**mercy**” and “**compassion**” occur jointly with regard to the salvation process. **This Inclusion of Heavenly “mercy” is Well Documented** (Rom. 9:15-16, 18, 23; 11:30-32; 1 Cor. 7:25; Eph. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:13, 16; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:10).

Observe, the present tense verb used to indicate God “**says**” (λεγει) or *speaks* to Moses, for it marks this citation as *Living Scripture which Currently Identifies How God Works* (1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:23). This text conveys how God “**will show**”, *have*, or *extend* “**mercy**” – *not getting the wrath we deserve* – to “**whoever**” (ὅν αὐ – singular pronoun), *any individual*, He “**might show mercy**” (ελεω – Rom. 9:15). This subjunctive verb is central to the intended meaning because it focuses on *the condition needed* for a person to be numbered with the “**called**”. For, it specifies **They must Receive “mercy” Based on God’s Prerogative**. Unfortunately, this detail of grammar isn’t transmitted by most popular Versions. And since this expression in the Greek text is so significant, consider the following more precise renderings of this phrase.

The Concordant Literal Version and Others translate this subjunctive verb with the term ‘**may**’ in place of “**might**” (BLB, ACV, Sawyer, BIB, JMNT). Thompson says God ‘will have mercy on whomsoever **I please**’ which also portrays the

extension of mercy *is based on His prerogative*. Others render the verb 'I **choose** to have mercy' which, again, depicts this act as *a divine decision* (Goodspeed, MNT, Williams, NSB). Lastly, the AUV offers another good rendition: 'whoever I **want**'. Next, Paul doubles down by using a second subjunctive verb, "I **might show compassion**" (οικτιρω). This duality highlights the concept that God gives *sympathy* or *pity* to those He "might" or *may be pleased to*; He extends this olive branch of "mercy" to whoever He *wants* or *chooses to*. This declaration satisfied Moses because he recognized **Divine Privilege: God Holds the Right to Self-Determination** (Exod. 33:12-23).

Having established This Modus Operandi, the text continues, "Consequently **therefore** (αρα ουν), *it's not associated with the one who wills*, also *it's not associated with the one who runs*, but *it's associated with God who shows mercy*" (Rom. 9:16). So, what contextual subject is represented by the implied pronoun and verb of being, "*it's*"? Scanning this portion shows it centers on God's act of "calling" people to salvation (vv. 6-15; cf. 8:30) by His "love" (v. 13; cf. 8:28, 35, 37, 39) and "mercy" (v. 15); "calling" those He's *foreknown*, *predestined*, and *elected* to fulfill His "purpose" (8:29-33; 9:11). Of these terms, "mercy" is the most recently added and from this point is featured as *The Primary Action* underlying **Paul's Reply to his Critics about Who We should Expect to Respond by Faith to the Gospel** (9:23; 11:30-32).

As this verse begins, the particle "Consequently" (αρα), speaking of *result* or *consequence*, is paired with the conjunction "therefore" (ουν), which portrays a *deduction* or *conclusion* (Rom. 9:16). To some degree the meaning of these terms overlap but when they occur together, they introduce important conclusions as is evident by their usage (5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:18; 14:12, 19). Therefore, to summarize the consequential meaning of verses 11-16, God carries out His "purpose" by **electing** "whoever" He "wills" to show "mercy".

First Paul states this "calling" is "not" to be "associated with the one who wills" (θελοντος – Rom. 9:16). We've seen this term several times showing *Human-Initiated-Volition is absent from the salvation process* (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 1:4-5, 11; 2:1-9; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; Tit. 3:4-7). For, redemption has nothing to do with human "works", which are also represented by the phrase "the one who runs" or *exerts effort* (Rom. 9:12, 16). Then, Paul employs the conjunction "but" (αλλα) to pen a *sharp contrast* to what salvation does pertain to. This *Consequential Summary of God's Technique* used to "call" His people is "associated" or *affiliated* "with" the one "who shows mercy" (ελεωντος – genitive participle). This term signifies **The "called" are Predicated Upon The Divine Actor Who Delivers Saving Pity to "whoever" He "wills"**.

Next, to eliminate confusion about how regeneration works, the Spirit prompted Paul to add *a contrasting illustration*, "For the Scripture says to Pharoah that 'For this reason **I raised you up** in order that I might **display My power** in you and in order that **My Name might be proclaimed** in all the land'" (Exod. 9:16; Rom. 9:17). Many Christians think this Pharoah initiated the hardening of his own heart; however, God owned this reaction before Moses ever confronted the Ruler, "**I will harden his heart** so that he will not let the people go" (Exod. 4:21). This O.T. data is consistent with the theme of this context which presents **God's Foundational Aims** or "**purpose**": He wants to "**display**" His "**power**" and "**wrath**" by judging *Non-Elect* "**vessels of wrath**" and "**to make known the richness of His glory upon vessels of mercy**" – *His Elect* (Rom. 8:33; 9:11, 22-23).

Now that Pharoah and Esau have been set forth as models of rejection, Paul boils down his total message, "**Consequently therefore** (αρα ουν), **He shows mercy to who He wills**; also, **He hardens who He wills**" (Rom. 9:18). This means *everyone* "**who**" (ον – singular) God *actively* and *continuously* "**wills**" (θελει), He *actively* and *continuously* "**shows mercy to**" (ελεει). And *each one* "**who**" God *actively* and *continuously* "**wills**" (θελει), He *actively* and *continuously* "**hardens**" (σκληρυνει). These four present active verbs specify **God Resolutely Uses the Methods of Mercy to Call His Elect for Salvation and Hardening to Condemn the Rest to Wrath**. This short statement serves as *The Platform Undergirding His Plan* which is developed from this juncture through chapter 11.

But before we move forward, I'd like to address the issue of whether God has the right to do what has just been deliberated. If you're wondering about this, it's well-timed since the context focuses on this point next. Likewise, some may be asking whether I'm interpreting this text properly or if some of my deductions are compatible with moral fairness. These are legitimate questions so they should and will be discussed. However, I ask each reader to be patient until the portion explaining what God has done is covered, which concludes in verse 23.

"Therefore (ουν), you say to me, 'Why does He still find fault, for who has stood against His **counsel**?' (Rom. 9:19). In reference to these lessons about divine "**election**" and "**mercy**", once again *a man is earmarked* by the singular verb "**you say**" (ερεις). More than likely he was an influential Christian in Rome who dissented with Paul's teaching and argued that God shouldn't find fault with any sinner since no human can *begin* and *continue* (perfect tense) to *stand* "**against**" (ανθεστηκεν = αντι + ιστημι), *resist*, or *oppose* His "**counsel**".

The noun “**counsel**” (βουληματι) portrays a similar connotation as the term “**will**” (θελημα), though it adds the idea of *group collaboration* (Luke 23:51; Acts 5:38; 27:43; 1 Pet. 4:3). This thought could mean, prior to creation, the Father *consulted* Other Members of the Godhead in regard to His “**purpose**” of *predestining* people “**according to the counsel** (βουλην) **associated with His will**” (θεληματος – Eph. 1:11, cf. Acts 2:23; 4:28; 20:27).

To counter this renegade’s attack on how God functions, Paul exclaims, “**O man, indeed therefore, who are you, the one answering back to God? Does the thing formed say to the one having formed it, ‘Why did You make me likewise?’ – ‘no’**” (Rom. 9:20). Wow! This is one of the fieriest comebacks in the Epistles. For, the phrase “**O man**” (ω ανθρωπε) appears in the vocative case, meaning Paul *directly addressed* this person. Also, his subsequent questions are prefaced by the conjunction “**therefore**” (ουν) combined with the particles “**indeed**” (μεν) and “**γε**”, which both *bring intensity* to this impassioned reply.

Paul starts with a challenge, “**who are you?**” Again, these singular terms identify *a distinct guy* and question whether *he’s substantial enough* (verb of being) to judge God. To me, this verbiage condemns arrogance much like phrases my grandma used, ‘**Who do you think you are?**’ and ‘**You really think you’re something, don’t you?**’ Then, Paul describes this man’s Critique of Divinity with the clause, “**the one answering back** (ο ανταποκρινομενος) **to God**”. This three-part word, which literally means *to judge from against*, defines his insolent attitude as *rebellious* or *defiant against* (αντι) God’s “**counsel**”. **For, he’s Not Only Rejecting The Divine Plan of Action but Also Questioning its Validity.** Take note this participle and verse 19’s verb both contain the preposition “αντι” which brands this protestor as *Anti-God* since he *Opposes The Father’s Right* to extend “**mercy**” to whoever He “**wills**”.

Next, Paul resorts to creation to counter this fallacious denunciation since everything in the universe was “**formed**” (πλασαντι) by God. Our words ‘plastic’ and ‘plasma’ are derived from the root of this participle as well as the noun, “**the thing formed**” (πλασμα). Then he restates this similar concept with the verb “**You make**” (εποιησας) which is also used with reference to the design of created objects. Obviously, we nor anything the Creator “**formed**” has a right to ask, “**Why did You make me likewise**” (ουτως), *in this manner*, or *thus*? Moreover, because this inquiry includes the negative “μη”, it conveys the expected response of “**no**”.²¹ Clearly, no one can oppose “**His counsel**” (Rom. 9:19-20).

Paul continues to further confront this man’s insult toward God, “**or does the potter have authority** in association with the clay to make out of the same lump,

indeed, one **vessel for value**, also one **vessel for lack of value?** – ‘yes’ (Rom. 9:21). Biblical analogies are famous for being simple, and everyone knows a “potter” holds the “**authority**” (ἐξουσίαν), *right* or *prerogative* to take a “**lump**” of “**clay**” and “**make**” (ποιῆσαι) whatever he wants. In God’s case, He executed His “**will**” in eternity past by determining to “**make**” two kinds of vessels which, in time, become *Living Vehicles* to carry out His “**purpose**” (vv. 11-18).

On the one hand, He made “**one vessel for value**” (τιμην). This noun is used to symbolize the “**price**” (τιμης) of redemption, *the precious blood* of Christ (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23). It also denotes the *monetary* “**value**” (τιμης) “**elders**” who do a good job are “**worthy of**” if their commitments to the Body don’t allow them sufficient opportunity to provide for their family (1 Tim. 5:17). Later in that Book, this term represents slaves *activating the* “**worth**” (τιμης) in their lives to serve their “**masters**” (6:1). Similarly, Romans 9:21 uses it to indicate each “**one vessel**” (singular) or *individual person* was created “**for**” (εἰς), *in the direction of*, or **with the purpose of Possessing Heavenly “value”** – “**vessels of mercy**” God “**called**” to “**make known the richness of His glory**” (vv. 23-24, cf. Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Thess. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Pet. 3:7).

On the other hand, some were created as “**one vessel**” (singular) or *individuals* intended “**for**” (εἰς), *in the direction of*, or *with the purpose of* having “**lack of value**” (ατιμίων). This noun adds an alpha (α) to “τιμη” which negates its meaning. Most often, it’s translated ‘dishonor’; however, its meaning of *being void of redemptive “value”* is seen by its contextual relation to the definition in verse 22. Before heading there, it’s important to observe the negative “οὐκ” signals a *positive expected answer* to this question; “**yes**”, the Heavenly “**potter**”, does have “**authority**” or *right* to create what He “**wills**” or *wants* (Rom. 9:16-21).²¹

At this point Paul finishes reproving this man’s critique of our Father, “**Also, if God while willing to display the wrath and to make known His power** bore in much longsuffering **vessels of wrath** having chosen to begin and continue to be produced for ruin, and in order that **He might make known the richness of His glory** upon **vessels of mercy**, which He previously prepared for glory, and **us** who He called not only out of Jews but also out of gentiles” (Rom. 9:22-24).

Why does verse 22 lead off with the conditional, “**if**” (εἰ)? In this context, it introduces the rationale “**if**” God wishes to accomplish His “**purpose**” by creating “**vessels**” of opposite intrinsic “**value**” with the intent to “**display**” **His Agendas of Judgment and Glorification**, **Then** “**O man, . . . who are you, the one answering back to God?**” For, all believers should accept the principle, *No Created Entity is Entitled to Challenge The Creator’s Motives* since He has definitive “**authority**” to use everything He designed as He “**wills**” (see vv. 11-12, 18-21).

Within this protocol, verse 22 amplifies two previous illustrations: God *"hated"* Esau by circumventing him as the *"seed"* of *"promise"*, plus He *hardened* Pharaoh's heart to the extent he refused to let Israel depart from Egypt. Also, this verse defines the climactic conclusion modeled by both men, *"He hardens who He wills"* (θελεῖ – Rom. 9:18). That verb and its participial form *"willing"* (θελων) in this verse occur in the present tense which stipulates **God Sustains An Ongoing Want or Desire to Highlight His Trait of Justice** by judging *"vessels of wrath"* crafted *"for lack of"* redemptive *"value"* (vv. 21-22).

The infinitives *"to display"* (ενδειξασθαι) *the wrath and to make known* (γνωρισαι) *His power"* reveal the *desired outcome* and help define this central component of God's *"purpose"*. The first infinitive just appeared in verb form to indicate He wished to *"display"* (ενδειξωμαι), *show* or *exhibit* His *"power"* through the struggle with Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17, cf. Phil. 1:28). This same Greek root also occurs *to "display"* God's *Positive Attributes*, including *"love"*, in acts related to *"election"* (Rom. 3:25-26; Eph. 2:4, 7; Phil. 1:28; 1 Tim. 1:13-16).

Remember, **Our Father's not Only A Loving God, He's Also A Just God**. And this section verbalizes the *Demonstration of Sovereign "power"* via condemning *"vessels"* created to *show* His *"wrath"*. Next, Paul adds He *"bore"* (ηνεγκεν) or *carried* these *"vessels of wrath"* with *"much longsuffering"*. It's interesting to note this quality of *"longsuffering"* (μακροθυμια), *patience*, or *taking a long time to become angry* is also seen in God's dealings with Fallen Men, both in regard to condemnation and redemption (1 Tim. 1:16). He distinctly wants mankind to understand *Celestial "mercy" is The Only Route* which can enable a sinner to traverse the Satan-controlled gap between us and God; from *"ruin"* ending in the Lake of Fire to salvation ending in *"glory"* (Rom. 9:22-23, cf. John 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:18ff; 2 Cor. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:1-4; Col. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).

Finally, these *"vessels of wrath"* are described as *"having chosen to begin and continue to be produced"* (κατηρτισμενα) or *completed* for *"ruin"* (απωλειαν) or *devastation*, the end of which is eternal judgement (Rom. 9:22; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:9-11; 20:11-15). The perfect tense indicates these *"vessels . . . begin"* then *"continue"* onward as fated toward *"ruin"*. Also, its dual voice signifies *they'll act upon themselves to choose* (middle) to *be made to "be produced"* (passive) for this outcome *by outside evil forces* (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:26).¹ This punishment of *"wrath"* awaits all who God *"hardens"*, a procedure further described in chapter 11 (Rom. 9:18; 11:7-10, 25).

Other than this portion, to my knowledge the only other N.T. passage directly coupling the concept of *"election"* with doomed individuals is the record of Judas' betrayal of Christ (John 6:70-71). Condensing Romans 9:22, **God Places His**

Justice on Center Stage by Judging “vessels of wrath” in order to “display” Divine “power”.

Before exegeting verse 23, let's revisit the segment's flow of thought: “If God while willing . . . to make known His power . . . and in order that He might make known the richness of His glory”; **Then**, as the Creator, He possesses “authority” to carry out both aspects of this “purpose” (Rom. 11-23). Consequently, equal to the goal of *publicizing* (γνωρισαι) His “power” by condemning “vessels of wrath”, God also called “vessels of mercy” for salvation “in order that” (ινα) or **With the Intent that “He might make known”** (γνωριση) or **Broadcast “the richness of His glory”** (v. 23). This aorist subjunctive verb depicts when He shows “mercy” to the “elect”, He *completes the necessary condition* to “make known” this key celestial trait of “glory”.

The noun “δοξα”, occurring twice in this verse, shouldn't be thought of as some otherworldly concept that's difficult to grasp, for at its foundation the term portrays *what is thought about something*, thus its *perception* or *representation* (Matt. 6:28-29; Acts 22:11; 1 Cor. 11:7, 15; 15:40-43; Phil. 3:19). **The promise of “glory” – Being Conformed to Christ's Image** – is the eternal destination all “vessels of mercy” await; **It's The Pinnacle and Prize associated with God's “purpose”** (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:18, 21, 28-30; 9:11-12; Eph. 1:6, 11-12, 14; 3:11-13; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:3-4).

In addition, this text expresses God wanted to “make known the richness (πλουτον) of” this “glory” (Rom. 9:23). In singular form, this noun conveys the idea of *wealth* or *resourcefulness* and represents the *nature* or *quality* of something; here, God's “glory”. It doesn't portray amount or abundance, nor is it plural in number as the common rendering ‘riches’ would suggest.²⁴ The noun “πλουτος” appears *in singular form* a dozen times as Paul describes the *abundant wealth* Body members possess because of various revealed “mystery” benefits we have “in Christ” (Rom. 11:12 [twice], 33; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:27; 2:2). When astronomers discovered Pluto, they must have deemed the orb a *rich addition* to our solar system, for *Pluto* was the Roman god of the underworld associated with *wealth* and *riches*.

Romans 9:23 concludes with the phrase, “vessels . . . previously prepared (προητοιμασεν) for glory”. This verb's only other occurrence reads, “good works which God prepared beforehand (προητοιμασεν) that we might walk in them” (Eph. 2:10, cf. Isa. 28:24 [LXX]). That instance speaks of the “good works” God *readied in eternity past* for those “created in Christ Jesus”, and now He expects us to *obey the condition* of the subjunctive verb, “that we might walk in them”. In this Romans text, this same verb depicts how God exercised “authority” to extend

"mercy" to "vessels . . . previously prepared" or *made ready* "for glory". Its aorist indicative form means the Father *completed this act* when He created these human vehicles to represent eternal "value" so that His "purpose . . . might remain according to election" (Rom. 8:28-30; 9:11-23).

Reflections About God's Dealings

It's time to take that intermission to address potential reactions to my commentary of Romans 9. In Christian circles I've heard questions like, '**Are we just pawns in God's game?**' and '**Are people just robots?**' As I comprehend it, this context teaches divine "election" portrays the thought salvation comes about by God's movement and totally apart from human volition. It details how men are rescued from "wrath" and granted "glory" when "mercy" is extended to whoever He "wills" (Rom. 9:11-23; Eph. 2:1-9). From our standpoint, this could be defined as **Destiny** or **Fate**; from God's perspective, **This Course of Action Fulfills His "purpose"**. And relative to *The Concept of Fairness*, this portion affirms the idea: **Everything God Does is Fair**.

At the end of the day, we ought to realize **Every Design of The Creator, including Us, is His Intellectual and Material Property**. Therefore, He has the "authority" or *Right* to utilize every part of it as He "wills" (Rom. 9:20-21). At the same time, we need to face the fact we're not God, we didn't devise an eternal plan, we don't exist of our own accord, we didn't save ourselves, *nor Do We Own Our Person*. "Or, don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which *is* in you, *and* you have from God, and **you aren't your own** (or, "don't belong to yourselves")? For, **you were bought with a price**; now glorify God in your body!" (1 Cor. 6:20-21). In truth, the Father redeemed us with the "price" of our Lord's blood to "the praise of His glory" so all of creation would "boast" in Him and recognize the preeminence of His "eternal purpose . . . in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:30-31; Eph. 1:3-14; 2:7-9; 3:8-13; Phil. 2:10-11; Col. 1:19-20).

In addition, I've heard responses like '**Then, God is mean!**' and '**I don't want to serve a God like that!**' I can only suggest to those who express comparable thoughts to ponder Scripture detailing His activity with an awareness that everything He does is without a trace of "unrighteousness" (Rom. 3:3-6; 9:14-20). We should all grapple with these Spirit-penned lessons and seek to dialog with others about how we should decipher what's written (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Also, each reader should realize the particulars related to "election" in this article are by no means exclusive, but very similar to what countless Bible teachers have taught over the centuries.

And keep in mind, a Bible Instructor's job is to research the Word, share what we learn, plus promote the study of and belief in its content. It's not our place to judge God's actions, try to adapt them to human logic, or explain them away. Though, if my current thinking was influenced by the world view gained in my religious upbringing or from other secular sources, I too would entertain questions like those just mentioned. So, may we all examine and apply His Word while praying for guidance to help purge our natural reasoning so we can be "transformed by the renewal of the mind unto the outcome to approve what the good, well pleasing, and perfect will of God is" (Rom. 12:1-2, cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Eph. 5:14-18).

Back to Romans

After delineating goals God achieved by "election", Paul ties this teaching to "us, who He called, not only out of Jews but also out of gentiles" (9:24). Just like the noun "vessels" (σκευη) in verse 23, the pronouns "us" (ημας) and "who" (ους) are accusative plural in form which specifies *We Too are Direct Objects* of God's work – "vessels of mercy . . . previously prepared for glory". This point likens current saved "Jews" and "gentiles" to Isaac, Jacob and All Past Disciples as we all serve to perpetuate God's "purpose" (Rom. 8:28-30; 9:6-23).

Unfortunately, some Christians propagate the idea Romans 9 – 11 only speaks to God's dealings with the Nation of Israel and in no way applies to how He "calls" members of the Body. ***This Verse Contradicts that Stance***, for the "us" includes Paul and all the Christians in Rome (9:24). Also, note the aorist indicative verb "called" (εκαλεσεν) is the same form found in Romans 8:30, both of which tie us in as those God designated for salvation in eternity past (cf. Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9). Thus, everyone adhering to this conviction should heed Peter's warning about how "the unlearned and unestablished twist" or *distort* Paul's writings just like the "rest of Scripture" (2 Pet. 3:15-16). For, the apostle to the gentiles teaches we're saved in the same manner as past saints since God has always "called" folks by "faith" issued to His "elect" in accord with His "will" (Rom. 4:1-8; 8:33; 9:11; 11:5-7; Eph. 1:4-6; Heb. 11).

Jews "Called" into the Body

Having deliberated how and why God saves men, the Spirit directs Paul to bolster these lessons with O.T. support. Initially, he references Scripture to establish the method God uses to "call" Jews into the Body of Christ. "And as in Hosea He says, 'I will call the one not *being* My people as My people and the one not having been loved as having been loved; and it will be in the place

where it was said to them “you’re not My people”, there they’ll be **called sons of the living God**” (Rom. 9:25-26, cf. Hos. 1:9-10).

The adverb “**as**” (ως) indicates God currently saves Jews *in like manner to* how He did centuries ago. In that day, He told Hosea to name his daughter “**Lo-ruhamah**” to indicate He’ll “**no longer have compassion**” (or “**mercy**” – KJV) on “**the house of Israel**” (Hos. 1:6). Later, He instructed him to name a son “**Lo-ammi**” to illustrate the Jews “**are not My people**” (1:9). Paul draws upon this unusual line of events to confirm **The “called” are Initiated by God’s “mercy”, Not by Human Choice or Merit**. For, He didn’t give them the “**wrath**” they deserved. And, once again, note how Scripture exhibits God’s “**love**” as central and fundamental to the redemptive process (Rom. 9:25).

“Also, Isaiah cries on behalf of Israel, ‘If the number of the sons of Israel might be as sand of the sea, the **remnant will be saved**’; for, while completing and cutting short, the Lord will accomplish the word upon the earth” (Rom. 9:27-28, cf. Isa. 10:22). Like then, at present just a part of Abraham’s descendants “**will be saved**” (cf. Rom. 9:6-8). It’s noteworthy this verb is used interchangeably with the predominant verb in this section – “**called**”. **This Demonstrates: The “Called” and “Saved” are The Same People** (8:28-29; 9:7, 12, 24-26). In one respect, God “**bore in much longsuffering vessels of wrath**” who were *hardened* and, thus, reject the gospel. Conversely, through His “**mercy**”, “**the remnant**” (υπολειμμα) or *remaining portion* “**will be saved**” (σωθησεται). This verb’s passive voice points to “**the Lord**” as the *Outside Agent* who puts this redemption into effect.

Next, Paul adds a third quote, “**And according as Isaiah previously said, ‘except the Lord of hosts left a remnant for us as seed, we would be made like Sodom and we would be caused to be like Gomorrah’**” (Rom. 9:29, cf. Isa. 1:9). Here, the primary focus is if God hadn’t “**left a remnant**” (εγκατελιπεν) or *set aside* certain Israelites for His “**seed**”, all would’ve faced ruin like those who stayed in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:15-26; Rom. 9:7-8). Another significant point is this compound term contains the verb “**to remain**” (λειπω) which has the same root as the noun “**remnant**” (λειμμα) in verse 27. These are the first two of five times this term occurs in reference to **God’s Elect Remnant**. The other three are found in 11:3-5, where this exposé on “**election**” concludes.

Gentiles “Called” into the Body

“Therefore, what shall we say? Because the gentiles, while not pursuing **righteousness**, received **righteousness**, also the **righteousness** out of **faith**; also, Israel while pursuing the law associated with **righteousness** didn’t attain unto the law. On account of why? Because, not out of **faith** but as out of **works**

they stumbled in relation to the stone of stumbling according as it has been written, 'Behold, I place in Zion (Jerusalem) a stone of stumbling and rock of offense, and the one **believing** upon Him won't be made ashamed'" (Rom. 9:30-33, cf. Isa. 8:14; 28:16).

These verses begin with the conjunction "**therefore**" (οὖν) which signals a *conclusion*. A second conjunction "**because**" (οτι) *marks what caused* this conclusion – "**the gentiles**" received "**righteousness**" even though they weren't "**pursuing**" it. Next, Paul defines how they obtained it, which was "**out of faith**". In other words, gentiles who weren't "**pursuing righteousness**" received it anyway simply because they *believed* the gospel. And what prompted their "**faith**"? The adjacent context links this volitional act of *belief* to God's "**election**", "**will**", "**calling**", and "**purpose**" (Rom. 9:11-12, 18, 24).

Furthermore, observe how the conjunction "**also**" (δε) in the final phrase of verse 31 *introduces the concept of "faith"* (πιστεως) *into this context* (Rom. 9:30). From this point through 10:17, this noun and its action forms appear 13 more times which *Emphasizes It as A Prominent Focus*. Similarly, a couple dozen terms with the root of "πιστις" occur from Romans 3:22 to 5:2, but after that the terms disappear with reference to regeneration until their reintroduction here. Deducing from these two sections which highlight "**faith**", the early chapters establish the principle, **Justification is by "faith" alone**. Still, *The Source of That Trust* isn't disclosed until chapter 9, where **It's Correlated with the "elect" and Confirmed to Originate from God** (Rom. 8:28 – 11:36, cf. John 6:34-71).

Next, verse 31 begins with the same conjunction "**also**" (δε) to signal *another new concept in the storyline*: Although "**Israel**" was "**pursuing**" (διωκοντα) or *chasing after "righteousness"*, many "**didn't attain**" it. "**On account of why? Because**" they weren't "**pursuing**" it "**out of faith, but as out of works**" (Rom. 9:32). In essence, a lot of Jews were striving to practice "**the law associated with**" or *affiliated with "righteousness"* (δικαιοσυνης). That is, **They were Trying to Keep the Law of Moses to "attain" a right standing with God** though Paul had explicitly taught, "**out of works of the law, no flesh will be justified** (δικαιωθησεται or "**made righteous**") in His presence, for through the law is the full knowledge of sin" (3:20).

Therefore, Jews who sought to establish their own "**righteousness**" by "**works**" (εργων) . . . **stumbled in relation to the stone of stumbling**", which is Christ. But they should've known better since their own Scripture teaches "**the one believing on Him won't be made ashamed**" (Isa. 28:16). For, **The "righteousness" He Procured Through a Perfect Life, Death and Resurrection** is the only basis for anyone to become acceptable to our holy God (John 14:6; Rom. 3:21-26; 4:25; 9:32-33; Eph. 1:4-5; Phil. 3:8-9). Finally, the preposition "εκ" in verse 32, which

depicts *source*, occurs in both the phrase “out (εκ) of faith” and its contrasting counterpart, “out (εξ) of works”. Remember, earlier the phrase “out (εξ) of works” was contrasted with “out (εκ) of the one who calls” (Rom. 9:11-12). So, this passage also includes this grammatical link between individuals who exercise “faith” in the gospel and the “called” or “elect” of God (v. 24, cf. John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:8-9).

Romans 10

As the narrative flows, Paul again directs attention back to fellow Jews, “Brothers, indeed, the good pleasure of my heart and petition toward God is on behalf of them for **salvation**. For, I testify to them because they have a zeal associated with God, but not according to full knowledge” (vv. 1-2). He recognizes their “zeal” or *fervor* “toward God”, however, many of them have a misplaced enthusiasm since they are ignorantly “seeking to establish their own righteousness”. And together with this approach, they aren’t “subject to the **righteousness of God**” (v. 3). Again, note how the term “salvation” parallels the “called” of God in this running context (see comments on 9:27).

Next, Paul provides the remedy for this indictment, “For Christ is the completion of the law resulting in **righteousness** for everyone who **believes**” (Rom. 10:4). This means “the completion” (τελος)²⁵ or *culmination* of **God’s Standard of “righteousness” expressed in the Law of Moses** can only be attained by one “who believes” or *places trust* in Christ (Rom. 7:7-14). For, Jesus is the lone Person who’s been confirmed in perfection – the “**righteous requirement of the law**” – which He attained after living a sinless life, suffering death, and being resurrected as our substitutionary sacrifice (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 3:10-14; Heb. 4:15; 9:11-12). All others “seeking . . . righteousness” based on “works” can never reach the **Required Level of Sinless Perfection** to be accepted by God but will only encounter “condemnation” (Rom. 3:19-28; 8:1-4; 9:12, 32).

Having established this *Single Real Path for Redemption*, Paul sets forth two ways the Law of Moses sets forth how “**righteousness**” can be gained. In verse 5, he cites how a man “**will live**” if he completes the works of the “law”. However, as already conveyed, our Lord is the only one who ever accomplished this feat (Lev. 18:5; John 14:6; Rom. 3:19-22; Gal. 2:16). Second, **Deuteronomy 30:11-14** is referenced to illustrate how men are saved today through “**the word of faith which we preach**” (Rom. 10:6-8). This method is distinct from “seeking . . . righteousness” by “the works of the law” and is exemplified by the well-known verses: “because if you might acknowledge the Lord Jesus in your mouth and you might **believe** in your heart that God raised Him out of the dead, you’ll be

saved. For with the heart he **believes** resulting in **righteousness**, also with the mouth he acknowledges resulting in **salvation**" (vv. 9-10).

After asserting *This Current Algorithm for Regeneration*, Paul quotes more O.T. verses to show how **"both Jew and Greek"** come to Christ: **"Everyone believing upon Him won't be made ashamed"**, and **"Everyone who might call upon the name of the Lord will be saved"** (Rom. 10:11-13). The first quote is the same passage cited in the last chapter, so its replication accentuates the principle derived from **Isaiah** that **"righteousness"** is obtained by **"believing"** (Isa. 28:16; Rom. 9:33). Its counterpart from **Joel 3:5** introduces the term **"call upon"** (ἐπι + καλεω) to the dialog, a verb which closely allies in meaning with the primary contextual term **"faith"** and provides a segue moving forward.

Accordingly, verses 14-15 reason that no one can **"call upon the name of the Lord"** unless they first *believe*; this belief requires *hearing* (ακουω); and this audible message requires *someone to preach it*. Then, Paul states, **"But not all"** the Jews **"obeyed"** (υπο + ακουω = **to hear under**) **the gospel**". Next, he cites **Isaiah** for support, **"Lord, who believed our heard message?"** (ακοη – or *report*, Rom. 10:16; Isa. 53:1). Finally, he deduces, **"consequently, faith is out of the heard message"** (ακοης), **also the heard message** (ακοη) **is through the word associated with Christ**" (v. 17). In conclusion, he makes the exclamatory inquiry, **"But I say, did they hear"** (ηκουσαν)? – **"yes"**" (v. 18).

There's a lot going on in this portion. First, several Greek terms are noted to show the emphasis on **Hearing** the gospel message. Second, the question in verse 18 is answered by the presence of both negatives "ου" and "μη" which together indicate *a positive response*; so **"yes", All the Israelites Heard**.²¹ Third, the *conclusive* term **"indeed therefore"** (μεν + ουν + γε – also used in Rom. 9:20) *intensely confirms* the entire Nation **heard**, which is reinforced by Psalm 19:4, **"their utterance went out unto the whole land, and their words went out unto the ends of the inhabited earth"**. Fourth, the *conjunction of contrast*, **"But"** (αλλα), which introduces verse 18, also begins verses 16 and 19. Fifth, the question in verse 19, **"But (αλλα) I say, did Israel know? – 'yes'"**, also contains "ου" and "μη", so just like verse 18, this indicates **"yes", They Knew**.²¹

With all these details in mind, the triplicate use of "αλλα" helps to develop the chapter's explanation of why more Jews hadn't believed the gospel. For, as a Devil's advocate, Paul employs this conjunction in defense of his people. **"But"** (αλλα), they didn't **hear!**" (v. 18). **Oh yes, they did.** **"But"** (αλλα), they didn't **know!**" (v. 19). **Yes, they also knew.** **"But"** (αλλα), **not all obeyed the gospel"** (v. 16). **That's it!** This statement *Strikes The Bullseye of Thought Targeted by The Spirit* and is reminiscent of what Jesus said, **"My sheep hear My voice, and I**

know them, and they follow Me” (John 6:44-45; 10:25-27). In any circumstance, **Only God’s Elect Can & Will Respond with “faith”**.

More Scripture supports this conclusion, **“First Moses says, ‘I will provoke you to jealousy based on *that which is not* a nation; I will provoke you to wrath based on a nation without understanding (ασυνετῶ)’”** (Rom. 10:19; Deut. 32:20-21). This adjective is a three-part word consisting of an *alpha* (α), which negates the meaning; the preposition “συν”, conveying the idea of *with* or *together*; and the verb “ιημι”, which means *to send*. It identifies times when God saved gentiles who were *incapable of putting together* revelation in regard to His offerings. Despite this, God saved some of them to **“provoke” or perturb “Israel” to “jealousy” and “wrath”**. *This Course of Action Verifies that Men Can Only be Redeemed by Divine “mercy”*, a truth frequently propagated in the extended context (9:14-18, 23; 11:30-32).

Paul cites a second prooftext, **“Also, with daring, Isaiah says, ‘I was found among those *not seeking Me*; I made Myself manifest to those *not asking for Me*’”** (Isa. 65:1; Rom. 10:20). This refers to *How God Approached Gentiles*: He **“was found”** by **“those not”** *actively or continuously “seeking”* (ζητουσιν – present, active) Him. For, the passive voice verb **“I was found”** (ευρεθην) denotes indifferent gentiles responded to the gospel because they were *prompted by an outside force*. Then, the middle voice of the second verb supplements this idea by indicating God **“made” Himself “manifest”** (εγενομην)¹ to those **“not”** *actively or continuously “asking”* (επερωτωσιν – present, active) for Him. Like the last verse, this quote *Features and Defines God’s Elective Mercy* to gentiles. And based on this message, it’s easy to fathom why **“daring”** assertions like this caused many Jews to be angry with Isaiah and their other Prophets.

To wrap up, Paul continues in the same portion, **“Also, He says to Israel, ‘The whole day I stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people’”** (Isa. 65:2; Rom. 10:21). Combining these quotes from **Deuteronomy** and **Isaiah** underscores how God revealed Himself to uninterested gentiles while many from **“Israel”** were *actively and continuously “disobedient and contrary”* (two more present, active participles, cf. Matt. 23:37-39). The primary point of Romans 10:14-21 is **God proves He’s the Savior** by extending **“mercy”** to some in His Chosen Nation along with Gentile Outsiders for the **“purpose” of Making Defiant Jews Jealous** (Acts 13:48; 16:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:1-5).

Synopsis of Chapter 10: Paul establishes the fact **“righteousness”** is available to anyone who **“calls upon”** the Lord with **“belief”**. But during O.T. times as well as in his day, many Jews who knew about the Messiah sought **“to establish their own righteousness”** by keeping the works of the Law. Based on this stubborn

rebellion, Scripture is targeted to develop the principle: *God Reveals Himself to Gentiles who showed No Interest Simply to Provoke "Israel" to Jealousy* (10:3, 19-21). This theme rolls into the next chapter which finalizes the definitions of **Election** and **Hardening** (11:1-10). Following that, Paul returns to God's current purpose of provoking Israel to **"jealousy"** (11:11ff). Moreover, the closing of Romans 10 directly integrates the divine procedure of initiating **"faith"** in gentiles with the truths connected with **"election"** recorded in chapters 8 and 9.

Chapter 11

"Therefore, I say, has God pushed aside His people? – 'no' (μη).²¹ Let there be no possibility! For, I'm also an Israelite out of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 12:1). Paul gets personal here. The fact he believed the gospel shows God hadn't **"pushed aside"** all Israelis who rejected the Messiah, for he too had previously renounced Christ but is now a prime example of God's **"election"** (Acts 9:15; 1 Tim. 1:12-16).

Regarding this matter, **"God didn't push aside His people who He foreknew. Or don't you know what the Scripture says in Elijah as he intercedes to God against Israel? 'Lord, they killed Your prophets; they tore down Your tables of sacrifice, and only I was left (υπο + λειπω), and they seek my life'"** (1 Kings 19:10, 14; Rom. 11:2-3). Then God's response, **"I reserved (κατα + λειπω) for Myself 7000 men who haven't bent their knee to Baal"** (1 Kings 19:18; Rom. 11:4). Based on this historical event, Paul *concludes*, **"Therefore, likewise in the now time a remnant (λειμμα) has come into being according to election associated with grace"** (Rom. 11:5).

Breaking down this text, it asserts, **"likewise" (ουτως)**, or *in like manner* to how Elijah and 7000 Israelites became God's **"remnant"**, **"now" (νυν)**, or **"in the" present "time"**, **People are Saved in The Same Way**. And Paul presents himself as *Exhibit One*, an **"elect (εκλογης) vessel"** (Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:21, 23; 11:1; Gal. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:12-16). Beyond these examples, the context has solidified this point several times: *Unless God "calls" Someone, Neither Jew or Gentile Would Come to Him*. So, if a **"remnant" (λειμμα)** or *remaining number* is to believe and exist as a testimony, they must first receive **"mercy"** as a **"vessel"** of God's **"election"** (Rom. 8:28-30; 9:14-18, 21-29).

The text goes on to state this **"remnant"** of believers **"has come into being (γεγονεν) according to election associated with grace"** (Rom. 11:5). This perfect tense verb of being indicates a Group of Redeemed *came into existence and continues to persist* by divine **"election" (εκλογην)**, *choice*, or *selection*. Next, this saving recipe is **"associated with grace" (χαριτος)**; it's *directly tied to unmerited*

favor. Then, Paul further defines this process, "Also, if *it's* in reference to **grace**, *it's* no longer out of **works**, since **grace** no longer becomes **grace**" (Rom. 11:6).

The first part of this verse expresses "if" redemption is conditioned on God's "**grace**", *His unmerited work*, it can't be "out of **works**" (ἐξ ἐργων), i.e., *sourced or rooted in man's endeavor*. Paul already illustrated this principle by recounting how Jacob was "called" before birth "in order that the purpose of God might remain according to election" and not "out of" his "**works**" (Rom. 9:11-12). There, "election" is contrasted with human "**works**", but this passage marks the first time "**grace**" is equated with "election". Therefore, **These Two Acts of God work Hand in Hand to Contrast with Man's "works"**.

Continuing this thought, Paul expresses salvation is "**no longer**" (οὐκετι) or *isn't still* sourced in man's "**works**", for previously the Law of Moses had proposed this formula (Deut. 30:1-20; Matt. 19:16-22; Rom. 3:19-20; 10:5). But now, new revelation confirms this is "**no longer**" offered; we must be saved *by Jesus' Merit Available by "faith" in His Work on the Cross* (Rom. 3:21-28; 4:22 – 5:2). For, those "**seeking to establish their own righteousness**" are completely off base, no matter the "**zeal**" exhibited in their pursuit (10:2-3). And this section designates the act of "**believing**" the "**gospel**" is "**according to**" (κατ') or *in line with* "election" and "**associated with grace**" (10:16-21; 11:5).

If this wasn't the case, the following statement would be true, "**since grace no longer becomes grace**". The term "**since**" (ἐπεὶ) combines the preposition "ἐπὶ", meaning *based upon*, with the conditional "εἰ", which is generally translated "**if**" as it is at the forefront of this verse. So, this term indicates "**if**" the first section of this verse is true – "**if . . . works**" contribute to salvation – *based on that condition* "**grace**" could "**no longer**" be defined as *unmerited favor*. The verb of being "**becomes**" (γίνεται) strengthens this idea since it signifies the essence of the word "**grace**" would "**no longer**" exist "**if**" human effort/merit is involved. Therefore, **"if" Saving "faith" is Sourced in Man's "will", Human "works" Play A Role in Salvation. This Contradicts The Divine-Dictionary-Definition of "Grace" Which is Inseparably Tied with "Election"** (Rom. 9:11-23; 11:5-6).²⁶

Having established this point, Paul applies the lesson to current Jewish reaction to the gospel. "Therefore, *what is it? Which thing Israel is seeking for, it didn't attain this; also, the election attained it; also, the rest were hardened*" (Rom. 11:7). The conjunction "**therefore**" (οὖν) indicates this verse contains a *conclusion*. And whenever a verb is absent in the Original, it's justified to add the verb of being. So, by voicing this question, Paul *introduces a conclusion* about "**what**" the essence of the spiritual principle laid out in verses 5-6 "**is**" or *means* when it's applied to "**Israel**".

To begin with, the demonstrative pronoun **"this"** (τουτο) refers to *the contextual concept* of **"righteousness"** people from **"Israel"** are *currently* **"seeking for"** (επιζητει – present tense) or *pursuing* (Rom. 11:7). However, we've already seen **"this"** wasn't achieved by a single Jew who sought it by **"works"** (10:2-3; 11:6). Also, this verse adds support for the assertion introduced in Romans 9:6-7 which specified not all of Abraham's **"flesh"** descendants are **"children of God"**, His **"seed"**, or *Spiritual "Israel"*.

Then, Paul employs the conjunction **"also"** (δε) to connect two *statements that add info* to the storyline which explains why some Jews reached their goal of **"righteousness"** and others didn't (Rom. 11:7). First, every individual included in God's **"election attained it"**; they were **"saved"** because the Spirit enabled them to **"believe"** or **"call upon the name of the Lord"** (10:9 – 11:6). Their receptivity to the gospel proved they were created **"vessels of mercy"**; part of God's **"election"**; ones He **"foreknew"**, **"predestined"**, and **"called"** (Rom. 8:28-33; 9:11-24).

On the other side of **The Divine Ledger**, **"the rest were hardened"** (επωρωθησαν) or *made callous* (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12, 15). This verb's passive voice points to *an outside agent which caused this response*. Based on the context, these are **"vessels of wrath"** and could be categorized as **Non-Elect** like Esau, Pharaoh, all except 7001 in Elijah's time, and every past or present Jew and gentile who refused **"Christ"** (2:5; 9:12-22; 11:25; 1 Pet. 2:7-8).

Again, Paul cites Scripture *To Elucidate This "Hardened" Response*, **"According as it has been written, 'God gave to them a spirit of slumber (or "deep sleep")', eyes associated with the outcome not to see and ears associated with the outcome not to hear, until this very day"** (Rom. 11:8, cf. Deut. 29:2-4; Isa. 29:9-16; Rom. 10:16-21). This text substantiates these Jews couldn't **"see"** or **"hear"** the saving value of the gospel *Since They were Suppressed by Divine-Sourced "slumber"* (cf. Matt. 11:15; 13:9-17).

If this citation didn't adequately explain their callous reaction, Paul cites **David**, **"Let their table be made (γεννηθτω) for a snare and for a trap and for an offense and for a recompense to them; let their eyes be darkened (σκοτισθητωσαν) associated with the outcome not to see, and let them bend their back over continually"** (Rom. 11:9-10, cf. Psalm 69:22-23). These two passive voice verbs reveal *an outside force behind these actions*. Like verse 8, **The Clear Agent is "God"** who makes sure everything on their **"table"** ends badly, blinds them from truth, and facilitates their bent **"back"**, **"stiff-necked"**, *rebellious* response to Him (Ex. 32:9; 33:3, 5; Deut. 9:6; 31:27; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Present Implications of God’s “Purpose”

Now that this lengthy discourse on the particulars of **Election** and **Hardening** is complete, Paul *concludes*, “**Therefore, I say, did they (Israel) stumble in order that they might fall? – ‘no’ (μη).**”²¹ Let there be no possibility! But, in reference to their **transgression, salvation exists for the gentiles unto the outcome to provoke them to jealousy**” (παραζηλωσαι – Rom. 11:11). He begins to finalize an answer to his detractors by explaining why his ministry didn’t revolve around Israelites but focused on gentiles. His rationale includes Israel’s “**transgression**” of *Rejecting Their Christ* plus the fact he was commissioned to be “**an apostle of the gentiles**”, a task which aligned with God’s current aim “**to provoke**” Israel “**to jealousy**” (10:19-21; 11:11). Hence, he majored on a gentile “**ministry . . . if somehow I might provoke my flesh to jealousy** (παραζηλωσω) and might **save certain ones out of them**” (vv. 13-14).

Essentially, Paul claims he’s operating in concert with the Father’s “**purpose**” of “**calling**” more gentiles to “**salvation**” which inevitably triggers Jews “**to jealousy**”. **His Divine Orders Parallel the New Strategy that No Longer Positions Israel as A Favored Nation nor Better than Previously Alienated Gentiles** (Eph. 2:11-14). For, in this present “**administration of grace**” He wants all to realize those who come to Him do so by “**mercy**” and “**election**”, not human “**works**” (Eph. 2:4 – 3:12). To illustrate this *Celestial Change*, Paul pens the “**fig tree**” analogy which demonstrates God’s “**kindness**” (**Election**) has resulted in some placing “**faith**” in Christ, but His “**severity**” (**Hardening**) ends in judgment for those who reject (Rom. 2:4-5; 11:15-24; Eph. 2:7). And since God is in full command of who is redeemed, it’s evident none of us should take any credit or “**boast**” (Rom. 3:27; 4:2; 11:18; 1 Cor. 1:29-31; Eph. 2:8-9).

After this theological graphic, Paul applies its relevance to the happenings of his day. “**For, brethren, I don’t want you to be ignorant of this mystery in order that you might not be thinkers beyond yourselves (i.e., your own capacity) because a partial hardening has happened and persists in reference to Israel until which time the fullness of gentiles might come in, and likewise all Israel will be saved . . .**” (Rom. 11:25-26). The noun “**mystery**” (μυστηριον) represents the idea His suspension of promises to Israel and initiation of the current plan to save the “**fullness**” or *full amount* “**of gentiles**” was a *secret* until it was revealed (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-10; Eph. 3:1-12). In other words, he wants these “**brethren**” not “**to be ignorant**” of *This New Body of Truth* but **To Recognize It Contains God’s Current Standard Defining How He Relates with Men**.

For, “**this mystery**” includes the reality: since the time “**Israel**” rejected their Christ, they exist in “**a partial hardening**”. From one perspective, this context speaks

about some Hebrews being saved. However, this wasn't happening *In Fulfillment of O.T. Promises* or in vast numbers like gentile conversions, but in accord with God's "purpose" to bring more non-Jews in as equal members of the Body (Rom. 9:24; 11:1, 5-7, 17; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 2:11-22).

Additionally, "mystery" revelation provides details for when Israel's "partial hardening" is over, for *Then God will Fulfill all His Promises to Them* (Rom. 11:26-29). This thought is conveyed by the perfect tense verb "has happened and persists" (γεγονεν) which specifies this "hardening" began with their National rejection of the Messiah and continues with an ongoing stance of resistance (vv. 11, 15). The "time" this **Blind Spiritual Condition** will end is when "the fullness of gentiles might come in" (εισελθην) or arrive.

This verb's subjunctive mode indicates when *the condition for this phase* of God's Plan comes, "likewise" (οὕτως), *thus*, or *in this manner*, "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). In other words, the Jews won't experience their O.T. promises until God finalizes the "mystery" part of His "purpose" which adds an unspecified number of "gentiles" **While this New Un-Propesied Program of The Church Endures** (Eph. 1-10). When this Gentile-Influx is complete, since His Chosen Nation still exists "as beloved because of the fathers according to election", all aspects of "God's gifts and calling" which "are irrevocable" will come to pass. These include Christ's return, eliminating "ungodliness from Jacob", and the New Covenant promise – He'll "forgive their sins" (Rom. 11:26-29, cf. Isa. 59:20; Jer. 31:33; Rom. 10:19-21; 11:11-14).

Now that Paul has finished answering his critics by educating them about the Jewish Nation's current place in God's "purpose", he pinpoints **The Core Reason** the Spirit had him write this treatise on "election" (Rom. 8:28-30; 9:11). "For just as you (gentiles) at one time were unpersuaded in reference to God, also now you (gentiles) were shown mercy in reference to their (Jews) non-persuasion; and likewise, now these (Jews) were unpersuaded in reference to your (gentiles) own mercy in order that they (Jews) might be shown mercy. For, God locked together all (both Jews and gentiles) unto non-persuasion in order that He might show mercy to all" (Rom. 11:30-32).

It's important to grasp what the terms "unpersuaded" and "non-persuasion" imply. These nouns and verbs consist of the letter alpha (α), which negates the meaning, prefixed to the root verb "πειθω", which means *to persuade, convince, or sway* (cf. Rom. 2:8; 10:21; 15:31; Eph. 2:2; 5:6). So, the first phrase in verse 30 expresses these gentiles weren't convinced (aorist indicative) they needed God's help, for they weren't "pursuing righteousness", nor "seeking" or "asking

for” Him (Rom. 9:30; 10:20). Therefore, the only way their lack of interest could change to “belief” is with divine intervention.

This is exactly what took place, for “at one time” (ποτε), or *in the past*, these “gentiles” were *in unbelief*, but “now” (νυν), or *presently*, “were shown mercy” (ηλεθητε) because of Israel’s “non-persuasion” (Rom. 11:30, cf. 9:11-12; 11:11-14; Eph. 2:11-13). The Jew’s “transgression”, their “rejection” of the Messiah, set in motion “salvation” being sent to the “gentiles” as the Book of Acts recounts (13:46-48; 18:6; 28:25-28). Also note, this verb’s passive voice *designates God as the outside agent* who determined to give each “elect” gentile “mercy” in line with His “will” and “purpose” (Act 7:51-60; Rom. 9:11-12, 14-18, 23; 11:11, 15; Eph. 2:1-5).

Furthermore, just as gentiles had been “unpersuaded”, “likewise” (οὕτως), or *in this same manner*, many Jews are “now” (νυν) or *presently* in the “non-persuasion” mode of “jealousy” as they react to gentile receptivity (Rom. 10:19; 11:11-14, 31). This scenario materialized “in order that” (ινα) or *for the purpose that* Jews “might” occupy the same position gentiles already held – the need to “be shown mercy” (ελεθωσιν). This verb doesn’t only point to *outside intervention* (passive voice), its subjunctive form means the action is *conditional*. And this form is a virtual match to an earlier verb in the dialog, “I will show mercy to whoever I might show mercy” (ελεω – Rom. 9:15). So, subjunctive verbs in both passages emphasize **God’s Prerogative is The Operative Condition for “whoever” He “might”, May, or Choose To “show mercy”** (9:14-18, 23).

In closing, Paul encapsulates his point, “For, God locked together (συνεκλεισεν) all unto non-persuasion in order that He might show mercy to all” (Rom. 9:32). This verb is composed of the preposition “συν”, meaning “together” or *with*, prefixed to the verb “κλειω”, which means *to shut, close, or confine*.²⁷ Its aorist indicative form means *God had already closed the door* on “all” by relegating Jews, who used to receive His favor, to the same level of “non-persuasion” as gentiles. Therefore, verse 32 combines the conclusion of the last two verses: *God Has Universally Cornered All Men in the Circumstance of Needing “mercy” to Be Saved*. Check out the footnote for Translations which more accurately render the subjunctive verbs in both Romans 9:15 & 11:31-32.²⁸

Moreover, the *Listed Reason* God took this approach is “in order that” (ινα) “He might show mercy” (ελεση) *to all*” (Rom. 11:32). This verb, just like the last, is subjunctive in mode so it repeats the point God “might”, *may*, or *can* exercise the *conditional choice* to “show mercy” (Rom. 9:15, 18; 11:30-32). And these three chapters clearly demonstrate He does “show mercy . . . to all” Jews and gentiles who were created as “vessels” of His “grace” and “election” (9:11-12; 20-24; 11:5-

6). In the end, **The Father Wants "all" to Know Redemption is Soley Based on His Choice of Extending "mercy" to "whoever" He "wills"** (cf. Eph. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:13, 16; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2:10).

In review, **Chapters 9 – 11** delineate God's current relationship with Israel; they're no longer His special people, so their advantage over gentiles has ceased (Rom. 3:1). Instead, they find themselves in the equally condemned position of depending on divine **"mercy"** for salvation (3:21-26; 9:15, 18, 24; 11:30-32). Amid this disclosure, Paul closes the book on those questioning why his **"ministry"** wasn't patterned around fellow-Jews.

He repeats the known facts that he was made **"an apostle of the gentiles"**, thus his routine mirrors God's current **"purpose"** to **"provoke"** Jews to **"jealousy"**, a consequence which *may prompt* more of them to be saved (11:11-14). Also, he clarified any past or present Israelites who **"believed"** exercised this positive response because they were counted among **"vessels of mercy"** God had **"elected"** (8:28-33; 9:11-12, 23-29; 11:1-10; 1 Cor. 1:26-31). Within this reply, Paul's opponents could see the justification indicating his unconventional **"ministry"** provided great value for Israel, and it took him off the hook as the Spirit guided his hand to *'Pass the Buck to God'*.

A Synopsis of "Election"

This topic can be summed up by the record of Ephesians 2:1-10. For, that context depicts unregenerate men as **"dead"** in **"transgressions and sins"**, under the control of Satan's **"spirit"**, naturally inclined to produce **"disobedience"** which results from **"lusts"** originating in **"the wills of the flesh and mind"**; and these folks are destined for **"wrath"** (vv. 1-3; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:26). They're physically alive but **Not Morally Capable of Choices which Please God**.

Therefore, if anyone is to be saved, *God Must Intervene*. So, He **"elected"** some before creating the world, then in time infuses still **"dead"** folks with His **"love"**, **"mercy"**, and **"grace"**. While instilling these reviving attributes, God makes us **"alive with Christ"** to become examples of His **"kindness"** in future **"ages"** (1 Cor. 1:26-31; Eph. 1:4-5; 2:4-7). Verse 8 defines **"this"** (τοῦτο) transaction – being **"saved by grace . . . through faith"** – as a **"free gift of God"**. This means **Redeeming "faith" is an Extension of His "grace"**, for if any part of this procedure rises **"out of you"**, it would include **"works"** and give men reason to **"boast"** (Acts 13:48; Rom. 3:27-28; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29-30; 1 Tim. 1:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14). But since God accomplished all of **"this"** to **"the praise of His glory"**, **He Alone Can "boast", Brag or Flaunt** (1 Cor. 1:26-31; Eph. 1:4-6).

The reality people can see the need to be saved from sin is because **"our hearts"** encountered the Spirit's **"illumination"** which spurs our yearning to be rescued from the **"authority of darkness"** and delivered to the Son's **"light"** (Acts 13:48; 16:14; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Eph. 5:8-9; Col. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:26; 1 John 1:5-7). Before that event, as detainees to the Devil's **"will"**, our decisions were restricted to acting out **"disobedience"**. After we were redeemed – **"baptized into Christ"** and received the **"Spirit"** – **Our Will was Freed to Overcome Slavery to "sin" and Practice "righteousness"** (Rom. 6:3-16; 8:15). Consequently, the concept of **'Free Will'** should never be used to characterize the spiritually **"dead"** but, instead, **"living"** believers who can choose to **"walk"** in the **"Spirit"** and produce **"good works"** (Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 2:10; 3:16; 4:20-24; 5:18; Titus 2:11-14).

The Value of Embracing This Doctrine

I agree with many proponents of **"election"** who say the most significant benefit which arises from this Divine Act is a better appreciation for our Father and His **"purpose"**. While I sympathize with this conclusion, I still think there's a more fundamental value. For, **How We Approach Scripture forms the Entire Basis For All Beliefs** including the issue of **"election"**.

Therefore, I believe the best way to neutralize the semi-philosophical theology in Christian culture today is to **Practice and Promote the Literal Approach to Biblical Interpretation**. Because when subjective teaching or commentary is allowed to distract us from this method, it can easily tempt us to question what we plainly see in *The Inspired Text*. Consequently, we should take care not to be influenced by assertions like, ***'This passage appears to teach (fill in the blank), but this concept can't be true since the Bible doesn't teach that'***, or equally damaging, ***'... my theology doesn't support that'***. The accurate application of God-given truth is at stake on every issue if believers don't stay the course of conscientiously adhering to what we see written.

Endeavoring to follow this approach, I've arrived at the following **Portrait of Our Father**: He created the universe, including His unique design of man. And He holds inherent **"authority"** to use *His Intellectual and Material Property* as He **"wills"** (Rom. 9:14-18). Thus, He desired to express His **"purpose"** with humanity by forming **"vessels of mercy"** to **"make known the richness of His glory"** and **"vessels of wrath"** to **"display His power"** (Rom. 9:20-23; 2 Thess. 2:11-14). He attained these goals through **"election"** and **"hardening"** with a view to bring **"praise"** and **"glory"** to Himself (Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 1:4-14; 3:20-21).

We, His **"children"**, have received **"kindness"** as heavenly **"heirs"**. He's given us **"life"** through our Lord's death and resurrection so we're **"acceptable"** to Him.

We're recipients of His "mercy", "love", and "grace". We've been given the "pledge" of the indwelling Spirit plus guaranteed a blissful and eternal "glory". Furthermore, when the teachings of "election" are factored into our outlook, it radically alters our perception of the Father's all-encompassing *unmerited favor*. For, if "grace" is defined in a manner which includes "works" in the redemptive process, its real meaning is diluted (Rom. 11:5-6). In return for all this, **He Merely Expects Recognition and Devotion.**

The argument '**God's Unfair if He Only Saves Some**' sounds reasonable except Scripture repudiates it. So, we have a choice. We can allow ourselves to be wave "tossed" and wind "blown" by Human Philosophy or guided by Biblical Truth (Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20-21). The Word portrays our Father in absolute control of redemption; He wishes all to know who He is and what He's done; and **He Demands and Deserves Credit for All of It.** This is *The Way God Chose to Portray His Awesomeness*. He's way bigger than we are and far beyond our capacity to fully grasp. Yet, He's been gracious enough to **Make Himself Known in The Pages of Scripture.** To use modern lingo, **HE WANTS TO BE SEEN!**

Furthermore, until we meet Him, I believe divine actions like "election" exist to force us to abandon flesh-instituted reasoning in favor of His Disclosed Revelation with the intent to commit us to *A Surrendered and Humble State*. Other truths having a similar effect include but aren't limited to Instruction about The Triune Godhead, Adam's Accountability for Sin though God Knew it Would Happen, and How the Spirit can Inhabit Saved Sinners. Although I don't comprehend these quandaries, I attempt to cope with them by the wisdom in a catchphrase heard in my youth, '**God says it, I believe it, that settles it**'.

Taking the Word at face value on "election" not only promotes an understanding of the Person of God but it also enables us to **Accurately Assess Mankind.** We've seen Scripture detailing how the minds and hearts of unregenerate men and women are controlled by "the god of this age", held "captive" in his "snare", and "blinded" to do his "will" (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:12 Tim. 2:26). In this "dead" condition, Fallen Men can do nothing, let alone generate "faith". Thus, *Believers Should Adopt This Pessimistic Image of Humanity.*

In contrast to this view, those who hold the Lost possess a 'Free Will' don't really realize their spiritual predicament. For, this secular-based theology is formed from the idea that all people, prior to regeneration, can autonomously make a 'Free Will' decision to accept Christ. However, we've seen the Bible solidly teaches God the Holy Spirit must first illuminate the unredeemed if they're to be freed from Satan's "will" and show interest in the gospel.

The *Significance of Applying This Appraisal* changes the way Christians approach life and ministry. For, when we assess the unsaved to be in spiritual confinement, we'll tend to share the only remedy – the gospel – rather than try to alter folks' worldview or cultural lifestyle. Also, we'll have an incentive to encourage Body members to engage in spiritual growth – “**putting off the old man**” and “**putting on the new**” / “**holiness**” / “**sanctification**” (Rom. 6:6-16; Eph. 4:17-32). So, by majoring in transformation of mind and character, we'll develop magnetic and complementary traits which help while sharing Christ. Then, the world won't only hear our message, but they'll see **Living Products of The Gospel** who have “**hope**”, show “**love**”, are “**kind**”, exhibit “**humility**”, and promote “**peace**” (Rom. 12:17-21; Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 4:5-6; Titus 2:3-10; 1 Pet. 3:15).

This thought serves as a bridge to the next advantage of advocating “**election**”; **This Perception of Humanity Affects Our Evangelism**. First, we're told to share what Christ accomplished on the cross while knowing it'll be considered “**foolishness**” unless God intervenes, in which case it'll be received as His “**power**” (Acts 17:22-34; 1 Cor. 1:18-24). By understanding *This Spiritual Facet of Regeneration*, we're less likely to revert to philosophical, psychological or intellectual methods to negotiate belief. Instead, we'll more faithfully depend on the simple recorded message, “**Jesus Christ and this one having been crucified**”. Paul said it best, his “**preaching**” wasn't “**in persuasive words of wisdom but in display of Spirit and power in order that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God**” (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

A second benefit of Comprehending Man's Condition is it avoids wrecking relationships. When we interact with unbelievers as if they should know better than believe in evolution, practice deviant sexual behavior, use ungodly speech, or hold to other philosophies we perceive to cause harm, we'll burn bridges. But if we gently approach them with Christian love – **Like God's done with us** – in time He may open their heart and give them “**repentance unto a full knowledge of the truth**” (2 Tim. 2:25). Also, we'll be around to offer direction, and they'll be more likely to join up with true Bible believers. However, if we're critical, they'll likely sidestep us and look for churches which accept sexual immorality, human values, and secular ethics. So, *How We Do Our Job is Crucial* to retain the opportunity of edifying the “**elect**” after they're “**saved**”.

Third, when our evangelistic message is typically rejected, which we should anticipate, we won't tend to take it so personally. We'll be far more able to “**endure**” as we perform our job with the confidence souls can be won since the “**elect**” are out there waiting to “**believe**” for “**eternal life**” (Acts 13:48; 2 Tim. 2:9-10). “**Thanks to God who always causes us to triumph in Christ and manifests the savor of His knowledge through us in every place. Because we exist as a good**

smell to God among those choosing to be saved (σφζομενοις – present, middle/passive)¹ and among those choosing to be ruined (απολλυμενοις – present, middle/passive)¹, indeed to some *we're a savor out (εκ) of death resulting in death*, also to some *we're a savor out (εκ) of life resulting in life*; and *who is qualified for these things?*" (2 Cor. 2:14-16).

Fourth, we can proceed with a mindset of feeling privileged God has determined to bring people to Himself by using imperfect "earthen vessels" like us to deliver the "treasure" of the gospel message (2 Cor. 3:4-6; 4:6-15). May we present our Lord Jesus Christ in a way which pleases Him and respects men with an eagerness to participate in the salvation and growth of the "elect".

A Brief History of Election

I've come to realize most Christians don't know **For The Greater Part of a Century following The Reformation** (1517) everyone taught salvation was linked with divine "election". Yes, Martin Luther imparted this truth, and his views are recorded in his commentary on Romans. Another noted contemporary, John Calvin (1509-1564), also taught on and wrote extensively about "election". The idea *saving "faith" could originate from man's will* didn't exist in the theology of believers who'd left the Catholic Religion until the latter 1500s when Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) is credited with introducing the concept. Still, his views weren't published or widely propagated until after his death. While living, Arminius was asked, **'If we can produce faith, can we also stop believing?'** He replied that *True Believers Can Lose Salvation by Falling Away from Faith*.

Today, the conviction God chose some people to "believe" is most often called 'Calvinism', but this label is misleading since he's simply one man who wrote a lot about the subject. The fact is, this doctrine existed long before Mr. Calvin, and that's why I took the approach of **Developing the Theme of "election" From The Only Inspired Text**. Moreover, Luther, Calvin, and many others hold a variety of views about the specifics of "election". However, *All Who Teach God Freely and Separately Selects Who He "wills"* agree the 'Free Will' stance of Arminius doesn't reconcile with Scripture.

To cap off, we can see the prominence of "election" showcased in Paul's earliest Epistles. In his first, he refers to the time of his own redemption, "**when God was well pleased**" (Gal. 1:15; Eph. 1:6). Later in the Book, by use of a double-take, he describes the salvation of gentiles, "**Also now, after having known God, also rather, after having been known (γνωσθεντες – passive) by God**" (Gal. 4:9).^{1, 9} Then, just a few months after initial conversions at Thessalonica, he says, "**knowing, brethren having been loved by God, your election**" (εκλογην – 1

Thess. 1:4, cf. 2:17). This text reveals **He Didn’t Baby Believers but Taught This Reassuring Truth** as soon as they came to the Lord.

Closing Thoughts

Biblical teaching on “**election**” offers ongoing benefits. It challenges us to *Acknowledge His Superiority and Holiness*. Also, pondering these truths should *Humble Us in Our Inferior Role* since **God Crafted the Gospel to Put Us in Our Place**. These self-deprecating lessons express universal need for His “**mercy**” in redemption, thus should help us view the entire Body as **Equally Significant Role-Players in The Celestial Performance of Revealing His “glory”** (Eph. 3:10-13; Phil. 2:6-11). For, “**God placed the members, each one of them, in the body according as He willed**” (ἡθελησεν – 1 Cor. 12:18). Therefore, for our own spiritual good, let’s magnify the Father by demoting ourselves and faithfully advancing **His Important & Eternal Revealed Truth**.

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New Testament quotes are original translations by the author from the Greek texts.

Old Testament quotes are from the NASV unless otherwise indicated.

Most Rarely studied Bible Versions cited in this article can be accessed at studybible.info

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- 1) In Koine Greek of the New Testament era, the **Middle Voice** in verbs, participles, and infinitives which expresses action (or being) basically indicates *the subject acts upon itself to perform the action (or being)*. This activity can be conveyed by the concept of *causing itself* to do (or be) something thus, in reference to people, it’s well translated with the idea of *making a choice*. The **Passive Voice** indicates *the subject is acted upon by a force or agent outside of itself*. This function *effectively turns the subject into a direct object* since the subject is *made* to do (or be) something by that outside actor. Action words (or words of being) which occur in a Middle/Passive Form convey the meaning of both voices.
 - 2) *The Bondage of the Will*, Martin Luther, translated by Henry Cole, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, pages 38-39. “This, therefore, is also essentially necessary and wholesome for Christians to know: *that God foreknows nothing by contingency, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His immutable, eternal, and infallible will*. By this thunderbolt, ‘Free-will’ is thrown prostrate, and utterly dashed into pieces. Those, therefore, who would assert ‘Free-will’, must either deny this thunderbolt, or pretend not to see it, or push it from them.”

- 3) In the 13th century, a prominent Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas, threw his weight behind a philosophy which explains how natural men can act by 'Free Will'. He hypothesized when Adam Fell, his physical body completely fell in regard to sin, but his mind didn't. So, Aquinas concluded man's mind, in its natural state, still holds the capacity to make positive spiritual choices, a thought which is fully debunked in Ephesians 2:3 as well as Psalm 14:1-3 (cf. Rom. 3:10-18). However, his influence has added lasting and unbiblical fuel to the argument supporting the thought unregenerate man has this ability. This heresy is embraced by the Roman Catholic Church in their doctrine about human works involved in gaining salvation. For, they claim Christ's death on the cross simply released mankind from the curse of Adam which now enables them to work their way to God. Then, half a dozen decades after the Reformation, this false teaching about 'Free Will' had a revival when it was championed by Jacob Arminius and began to infiltrate the thinking of some Protestant Christians.
- 4) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 78.
- 5) Regarding the form of this participle in First Timothy 2:14, some Greek Editions don't have the preposition "εκ" prefixed to the verb "απαταω". However, all major Greek Editions contain the compound form of this verb in Second Corinthians 11:3. In 1 Tim. 2:14, Versions rendering the force of the prefix "εκ" are: 'entirely deceived' (Twentieth Century); 'thoroughly deceived' (WNT, MNT); 'utterly deceived' (Williams); and 'completely cheated' or 'thoroughly deluded' (JMNT). In 2 Cor. 11:3, Versions rendering this verb based on its combination with "εκ" are: 'completely deceived' (Julia Smith, Rotherham); and 'thoroughly deceived' or 'fully deludes' (JMNT).

Note, directly following this First Timothy occurrence, the context delves into qualifications for Church elders. One ramification of women potentially being "thoroughly deceived" is this disadvantage prevents them from attaining the spiritual stability needed to guide assemblies amid certain difficult circumstances. Today, many concessions in assemblies and groups result from women being allowed to occupy leadership positions since they can't hold strong enough lines to sustain doctrinal and/or moral standards.

- 6) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 692.
- 7) In the Greek language, action (or being) conveyed by an Aorist Participle always precedes the action (or being) of verbs, participles or infinitives modified by it, even when these associated words of action (or being) are in the aorist tense. I was first taught this definition in Bible school and have confirmed it by routinely testing its multi-hundreds of occurrences in the N.T. The *basic meaning* conveyed by any grammatical form is determined when some contexts require its meaning to be understood in a particular way, then this same concept can be applied to every occurrence. A few examples where contexts necessitate aorist participial action (or being) preceding the action (or being) of associated words are John 12:36; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:9, 11, 13, 20; 2:14-15; Heb. 5:9.
- 8) Unlike how most Translations accurately convey the intent of the Greek text with reference to the passive voice in Acts 13:48, the sense conveyed by the aorist passive participle in 17:34 is almost universally ignored. JMNT represents the only remote depiction of this passive voice that I could find, 'being glued (joined; attached; welded)' – studybible.info.

- 9) Translations which render the verb “ἐχαρίσθη” as expressing the active unmerited favor of God are: ‘it is a favor bestowed upon you’ (Mace); ‘granted as a favor from Christ’ (Worsley, cf. Haweis and Worrell); ‘to you it is graciously given’ (Living Oracles, cf. Riverside, CLV, Williams, and LEB); ‘upon you it was conferred as a favor’ (Julia Smith); ‘you have had the privilege granted you’ (Twentieth Century, WNT, cf. Goodspeed); and ‘to you folks it is given by grace’ (JMNT) – studybible.info.

- 10) Technically, the article “το” by form can be nominative or accusative, so the context must determine which it is. Here, all three are nominative since they serve as subjects of the verb. However, since both article-led phrases command a passive voice verb, these phrases become direct objects of an *outside force* and, in this case, it’s designated as “**God**” (v. 28).¹

- 11) Three Translations accurately rendering Ephesians 1:13 are: Young’s Literal Translation, The Godbey N.T., and the Modern Literal Version which can be viewed on studybible.info.

- 12) Commonly used Versions that adequately translate Ephesians 1:13 are the KJV, NASV, and NKJV. However, the ESV and NIV incorrectly render it, ‘In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and *believed in him*, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit’ (ESV).

- 13) The following Versions render the phrase “in . . . faith of the truth” (ἐν . . . πιστει αληθειας) similar to my translation: Coverdale, Great, Geneva, Bishops, DouayRheims (a Catholic Version), Westley, Webster, Diaglott, YLT, DBY, Rotherham, TGNT, LITV, and more recently by MLV (1987) as well as JMNT (‘Truth’s faith’ – 2010) – studybible.info.

- 14) See studybible.info/JMNT/2%20Thessalonians%202:13.

- 15) In my assessment, the central portions of Scripture which form the basis for the *Church Epistles* are Paul’s 13 Letters since their content expounds God’s present “administration” (οικονομία), or *household management*, which defines the nature and function of Christ’s Body. This record is stated to be the revelation of formerly un-prophesied “mystery” (μυστηριον) truth which Jesus made fully known to “apostles and prophets”, but Paul was the primary one chosen to record it (Eph. 3:2-5; Col. 1:24-28). Also, I believe the contents of Peter’s two Letters and The Book of Hebrews fully align with Paul’s writings, so they should be equally applied to the Church (2 Pet. 3:15-16). My perspective on John’s Letters and the Book of James is explained in the text and footnote 21 of the article, ‘Our Spirit Connection – Accessing His Power’ found under the ‘articles’ tab on edifiedliving.net.

- 16) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 316.

- 17) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 142.

- 18) **Commonly Used Versions** most accurately rendering Ephesians 1:4, are: NIV, Modern English Version (MEV) & Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB).

- 19) Translations most accurately rendering Ephesians 1:4-5 are: ‘according as He did choose us in him before the foundation of the world, for our being holy and unblemished before Him, in love,

having foreordained us to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will' (*YLT*); 'As he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, for us to be holy and blameless before him in love: Having determined us beforehand for adoption as a son by Jesus Christ to him, according to benevolence of his will' (*Julia Smith*); 'even as he chose us in him before a casting down of a world, to have us holy ones and blameless ones in sight of him; in love having previously marked out us for sonship through Jesus Anointed for himself, according to the good pleasure of the will of himself' (*Diaglott*).

Additional Versions are: 'just-as he chose us in him before the conception of the world, *for* us to be holy and unblemished in his sight in love. Having predetermined us to *the* sonship through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the delight of his will' (*MLV*); 'exactly as he selected us in him ere the foundation of the cosmos, to be holy and unblemished in his sight in love: having predetermined us to sonship through Yah Shua Messiah to himself, according to the well-approval of his will' (*ECB*); 'even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without defect before him in love, having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire' (*WEB*); and 'just as He chose us in Him before *the* foundation of *the* world for us to be holy and blameless before Him, in love having predestined us for divine adoption as sons to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will' (*BLB*) – studybible.info.

20) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 643.

21) When it comes to how questions are presented, Greek is like Spanish where the expected answer is often indicated such as, 'Are you going to town? – "yes"' or 'Are you going to town? – "no"' In the N.T., questions presented with the adverb "μη" signify a negative response is expected. Questions set forth with the adverb "ου" signify a positive response is expected. In rare instances when "μη" and "ου" are both used in the presentation of a question, the expected response is positive (John 11:56; 18:11; Rom. 10:18 & 19; 1 Cor. 9:4 & 5).

22) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 156.

23) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 22.

24) Some Translations rendering the term "πλουτος" in a manner which represents its singular form are Mace, Diaglott, Twentieth Century, WNT, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Riverside, BBE, AUV, ACV & JMNT – studybible.info.

25) Most contemporary Translations render "τελος" the 'end' of the Law. I've chosen to render it "**completion**" to reflect its basic meaning and clarify the teaching of this context. Jesus obtained "**righteousness**" on our behalf, and we can receive it by simply "**believing**" in order to obtain the unblemished "**righteousness**" needed to be accepted by the Father. This thought contrasts with the idea this term means the 'termination' of the Law as rendered by WNT & Goodspeed. However, the following Versions lend support to my translation of "τελος": 'culmination' (*ISV*); 'fulfylling of the lawe' (*Great*); 'fulfillment' (*WEB*); 'consummation' (*CLV*); 'completion/shalom' (*ECB*); and 'final act' (*JMNT*), studybible.info. Also, the *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* provides the primary meaning for "τελος" as '*an end accomplished: the completion or fulfillment of anything*' (Oxford, October 1871, p. 697).

26) Many later manuscripts include the following phrase in this verse, “also, if *it’s out of works*, it’s no longer grace, since *work is no longer work*”. The same principles used to exegete this verse in reference to the noun “grace” can be applied to this additional phrase in reference to the noun “work”. When this is done, this extra phrase conveys the same theological meaning. The only difference is it defines the term “work” (εργον).

27) *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 379.

28) In Romans 11:31-32, most commonly used Versions including KJV, NASV, NIV, and ESV translate these subjunctive mode verbs with ‘may’ and/or ‘might’ even though they don’t render similar subjunctive verbs of Romans 9:15 in a manner which conveys a *conditional sense*. Versions more accurately rendering both contexts are Thompson, Sawyer, Goodspeed, MNT, CLV, Williams, ACV, JMNT, NSB, BIB, and BLB – studybible.info.

Appendix I

The safest way to address quandaries like, ‘**Did Adam truly make a ‘Free Will’ decision even though God foreknew this sin would happen?**’, is to compile all the available and pertinent facts.

So, initially God commanded Adam not to eat “fruit” from “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”; for if he did, He stressed this choice would end in death (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6). Note, this exchange happened before Eve was created, which is one reason Adam is always held responsible for the first “transgression” (παραπτωμα – Rom. 5:12-19). Next, the “woman” came on the scene because God desired to make a “helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:20, 23). He took “one of his ribs”, “fashioned” it “into a woman”, and “brought her to the man” (vv. 21-22). The remarkable nature of this partner is alluded to by the description, “the woman is the glory (δοξα) of the man” (1 Cor. 11:7). This noun depicts *perception* or *representation* which means Eve was perfectly tailored for Adam in the same manner he was formed to represent God’s infinite “glory”.

Also, when Adam ate the fruit, we know he “wasn’t deceived” (ηπατηθη – 1 Tim. 2:14). This verb means ‘to trick’ or ‘outwit’.⁴ Therefore, Adam was in no way deluded in this circumstance. In other words, **when he disobeyed, he knew exactly what he was doing**. In contrast, “the woman, having been thoroughly deceived, became and continued to be (perfect tense) in transgression” (παραβασει – 1 Tim. 2:14). The participle “having been thoroughly deceived” (εξαπατηθεισα) is built from the same verb, “απαταω”, prefixed by the preposition “εκ”, which means *out*. So, Eve was *out-deceived*; she was “thoroughly” or *entirely tricked*. Second Corinthians 11:3 corroborates this idea, “the serpent

thoroughly deceived (εξηπατησεν) **Eve in his craftiness**", which is the second reason accountability for this sin solely rests on Adam.⁵

Then, after God asked Adam if he'd eaten the fruit, he tried to play the 'victim card', **"The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate"** (Gen. 3:12). Eve's response was more honest, **"The serpent deceived me"**, which was in fact the truth (v. 13). So now, let's return to the original question of whether Adam acted by his own volition. On the surface, it appears he freely made this choice; however, it's also clear God knew what would go down. Was eating the fruit a foregone conclusion since Eve, *the irresistible marvel God constructed for him*, handed it to him? Whatever the case, God knew without a doubt what the outcome would be. At this point, I've surrendered to the notion **With God, We're on a Need-To-Know Basis**. And regarding this critical event, He's revealed the limited information He wants us to know.

He's revealed, **"death" entered "into the world, and likewise death passed through all men on the basis of which all sinned"** (Rom. 5:12). Continuing, this chapter portrays Adam as a **"type"** of Christ in that both men had an indelible effect on humanity. Adam's **"transgression"** placed his descendants into **"condemnation"** before God (vv. 15-16). In contrast, Jesus' single **"act of righteousness"** supplied what was necessary for **"those receiving the free gift of righteousness"** to **"reign in life"** (vv. 17-19).

Therefore, was Adam's sin really an act of 'Free Will'? Honestly, I don't know. As the Father portrays Himself, it's evident He's very complex. And not everything He's chosen to reveal about His Person or **"purpose"** makes sense to me, for some things are perplexing. Yet, I'm confident He set forth His attributes and plans in exactly the way He wanted.

Appendix II

It's interesting to contemplate when Jesus walked on earth if He truly functioned with 'Free Will'. We know He never sinned and the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. concluded **His human 'will' was always subject to His divine 'will'** (Luke 22:42; Heb. 2:17; 4:15; 5:7-9; 7:26). This determination seems to be correct, but I still don't fully comprehend the interface between His 'wills'. Nor do I think other complexities of His Person are easily grasped. For instance, the trinitarian concept of one God in three persons isn't completely logical to my limited way of thinking, yet I believe this explanation reflects what the Word teaches. So, to grasp God's identity, I concede we must be dedicated to studying, believing, and conforming our mind to the Word, then be satisfied with the resultant thought (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:4, 8; 1 Tim. 6:20-21). Ultimately, I think God

portrays Himself in a bewildering manner at times to keep us off balance and humble, so we’ll be dependent on Him.

Appendix III

Before exegeting the relevant grammar of Acts 13:48, here’s a more literal translation: “**having heard, the gentiles were rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and they believed, as many as were existing** (ἦσαν) **as those who chose to begin and continue to be made arranged** (τεταγμενοι) **unto eternal life**”. The first significant point is the imperfect tense verb of being “ἦσαν” which indicates those responding with belief had *previously and on an ongoing basis* been “**existing**” or *had their being in the actuality* described by the following participle. For, the imperfect tense represents *continuous action in past time*.

This *Condition of Existence* is paired with the participial action of “τεταγμενοι”, which is derived from the verb “τασσω”, meaning *to arrange* or *put in order*.⁶ Its perfect tense specifies these folks *began at a point in time* “**to be arranged**”, *then continued in the state of being ordered or appointed ones* “**unto eternal life**” (Matt. 28:16; Luke 7:8; Acts 15:2; 22:10; Rom. 13:1; 1 Cor. 16:15). Combined with the movement and resultant state of this tense, the term’s dual voice specifies *they acted upon themselves* or “**chose**” (middle) “**to be made**” (passive) or *caused by an outside force* to begin and remain in this ordained state.

So, the question arises, how’s it possible for people before they hear the gospel to be “**existing**” in a constant state where *they gladly choose* (middle voice) *to be controlled by an outside force* (passive) “**to be arranged**” for “**eternal life**”? The only way to explain and express the interaction between these Greek terms is by recognizing the folks who “**believed**” were “**vessels of mercy**” created for God’s glory in eternity past (Rom. 9:11-23; Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9). Then, in time, the Spirit irresistibly woos them to trust in Christ. Thus, every Translation I know of appropriately renders this two-word phrase with the impact of the passive voice and leaves out the middle voice sense altogether. You can observe this same **imperfect verb of being / perfect middle/passive participle construction** in Acts 9:33 & Galatians 4:3.

Appendix IV

The phrase “εστε σεσωσμενοι” consists of a present tense verb of being and a perfect middle/passive participle. A literal translation of these terms is, “**you exist as ones having chosen to begin and continue to be made saved**”. This construction is similar to the one in Acts 13:48 discussed in Appendix III (ἦσαν τεταγμενοι); however, the present tense of this verb of being emphasizes *these*

convert's present state as compared with the imperfect verb of being "ἦσαν" in the Acts passage which focuses on *their past state*. Otherwise, both participles occur in the same grammatical form.

The root of the participle in Ephesians 2:8 comes from the verb "σωζω" which means *to save* or *rescue*. Its perfect tense indicates this salvation *began at a certain point* and *continues*. Its middle voice means the subject "**you**" *acted upon itself* or *made the decision "to be made"* or *caused by an outside force* (passive voice) to become "**saved**". Like any passage, these grammatical relationships must be interpreted in light of their context. First, the concept put forth by this phrase combined with "**faith**", all of "**this** (τουτο) is said to be "**the free gift of God**". Second, verses 4-5, which contain this same phrase (εστε σεσωσμενοι), describe how our saved condition ensued because God made us "**alive with Christ**". And this event happened while we were morally "**dead**" – willingly practicing "**sins**", "**transgressions**", and "**disobedience**" (vv. 1-3).

Third, this development follows the related foundational teaching of Ephesians 1:4 and 13 which show those who God "**chose**" were the ones who "**heard . . . the gospel**" and "**believed**". Therefore, just like the similar construct in Acts 13:48, I understand this one conveys the idea we "**exist**" in a state where, as God's elect, we *previously* and *gladly chose* (middle voice) *to be caused by the outside force* (passive) of the Spirit to believe the gospel in order to "**be saved**". Fourth, every Version I know of renders this participle either neutrally or with a passive sense, but never with the middle voice sense of human choice. And I think these renditions are correct. You can check similar **present verb of being / perfect middle/passive participle constructions** in Second Corinthians 4:3 & Colossians 2:10.

Finally, here are three Versions that render "εστε σεσωσμενοι" in a way which better represents its grammar: 'ye are having been saved' (YLT); 'you are having been saved' (Diaglott); and '**you are** (you continuously exist being) **folks having been delivered** (rescued; kept safe; saved; made whole; restored to your original state and condition) **so as to now be enjoying salvation**' (JMNT).

Appendix V

In Ephesians, the first occurrence of this **accusative** (direct object) **neuter demonstrative pronoun** is, "**And because of this** (τουτο), **I . . . don't cease giving thanks on behalf of you**" (1:15-16). Paul affirms he's praying for them because of "**this**" – "**after having heard**"⁷ about their "**faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints**", *realities forming his conception of them as converts* who desire to live the Christian life. Thus, he prayed for their understanding and growth.

Ephesians 2:8 contains the second incidence of “τουτο”, but in the **nominative case** (subject), which conveys the concept discussed in the article.

It's third appearance is **accusative** (direct object) in form, “Therefore, I say this (τουτο) and testify in the Lord for you to no longer walk just as the gentiles walk in the futility of their mind” (Eph. 4:17). Immediately following Paul's appeal, we observe “this” which he speaks and testifies about is *how the gentiles live plus the formula believers can use to change this inherited lifestyle* through being “renewed by the spirit (or “Spirit”) of your mind” as we “put off . . . the old man” and “put on the new man” (vv. 18-24).

The fourth time, an **accusative** (direct object) pronoun emerges in 5:5, “For, you are ones who know this (τουτο) that every fornicator or unclean person or coveter, which is (present tense) idolatry, doesn't have (present tense) inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” This dire statement is made just after the brethren are commanded to “become imitators of God”, which includes *understanding those who carry on profligate lifestyles* (present tenses) *not consistent with Christian morality* aren't believers nor headed toward future glory.

Next is Ephesians 5:17, “Because of this (τουτο – **accusative**), don't become mindless ones, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.” This order is based on *the adjacent illustrative explanation* just given which reminds Body members not to participate in the lifestyle of “darkness” from which they've come, but to “beware how accurately you walk . . . while redeeming the time because the days are evil” (5:6-21).

Sixth, this **nominative** form occurs in Ephesians 5:32, “this (τουτο) mystery is great, also I am speaking in reference to Christ and in reference to the church”. In this instance, the pronoun agrees in case, gender and number with the noun “mystery” (μυστηριον – the subject). However, even when demonstrative pronouns directly refer to a specific noun, they aren't like personal or reflexive pronouns which *take the literary place of* the noun referred to. Therefore here, “τουτο” represents the *concept of the “mystery” relationship between Christ and His Church* which is developed throughout the Book (1:4-6, 15-23; 2:4-10, 14-21; 3:6, 12, 14-19; 4:4-6, 13-16, 20-21, 32; 5:1-2). Moreover, as this noun is used in other sections, the once hidden but now revealed “mystery” truth enables us to *perceive our spiritual connection with Jesus* (1:7-10; 3:1-13; 6:19-20).

The seventh occurrence is, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this (τουτο – **nominative** subject) *is right*” (Eph. 6:1). *This dynamic* is one of the easiest to *conceptualize*. For, this occurrence *refers to every aspect of communication between “children” and their “parents”*.

Ephesians 6:8 contains an eighth instance which refers to the outlook Christian slaves are to maintain, "while knowing, if he might practice anything good, this (τουτο) each one will cause himself to receive back (middle voice)¹ from the Lord, whether slave or free." Just like in 5:32, this **accusative** neuter pronoun agrees in form with the accusative noun "good" (αγαθον - direct object), so "τουτο" modifies it. In this context, "good" refers to *positive works slaves do during this life* in addition to *how they'll be rewarded for these acts at the Judgment Seat of Christ*. For, Jesus will reward all believers' "good" works and burn up the evil ones which slaves or freemen produce after the point of salvation (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:12-17; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10-13; Col. 3:22 – 4:1).

The ninth occurrence is, "Because of this (τουτο – **accusative**), take up the full armor of God in order that you might be enabled to stand against in the evil day, and after having chosen to be caused to produce all things, to stand" (Eph. 6:13).¹ Again, the *concept portrayed* by this demonstrative pronoun is easily seen in verses 10-12. It consists of the need to "put on the full armor of God" to fend off nonstop spiritual attacks from evil celestial principalities and powers.

Finally, Ephesians 6:22 states Paul dispatched Tychicus, "who I sent to you unto this thing (τουτο – **accusative**) itself (or *this very purpose*) in order that you might know the things surrounding us and he might encourage your hearts." This section uses this pronoun to define *these believers' understanding and encouragement which will result from knowing the entire goings-on of Paul and his associates*. The aorist indicative verb "I sent" (επεμψα) indicates Tychicus had already arrived at Ephesus, so he probably delivered this Letter.

Those interested can check out the many other appearances of the nominative or accusative usages of the demonstrative pronoun "τουτο" which appears in the N.T. to confirm the basic meaning presented in this article.