

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 7, Election Systematic Formulations, Number 2**

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on salvation. This is session 7, Election Systematic Formulations, Number 2.

We're studying the doctrine of salvation in Holy Scripture, especially now the doctrine of election.

We're still pursuing election's timing, the fact that it's before creation. 2 Timothy 1:9 also speaks of election before creation. God saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

God gave saving grace to us to his own prior to time, that is, in eternity past, so-called. Once more, a pre-temporal election precedes our faith. Twice, Revelation speaks of people following the beast if their names are not in the Book of Life, quote, from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8, all those who live on the earth will worship the beast. Everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life of the lamb who was slaughtered. There are different ways of putting those words, and I'll leave that as it is for now.

The beast, Revelation 17:8, the beast that you saw, was and is not and is about to come up from the abyss and go to destruction. Those who live on the earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast that was and is not and is to come. To have one's name in the Book of Life means to be enrolled in the city of God, whereas to have one's name omitted means not to be enrolled.

By implication, the positive, like the negative, is from the foundation of the world, that is, from creation. The fact that God alone elects and does so before creation means that election and subsequent salvation are all of him, not based on foreseen human faith or deeds. This is exactly what we find when we inquire about the basis of election.

Election's basis, God's love and will. Scripture consistently locates the basis of election in God, not us. Specifically, it presents God's will and love as the grounds, the basis of election.

The Old Testament tells why God chose Israel out of all the nations on earth. Israel alone belongs to God for this reason. Deuteronomy 7:6- 8 states that the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.

The Lord had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 I apologize, I previously incorrectly said that was in Deuteronomy 5. Yeah, they were the fewest of all people. They were a man and his wife who were as good as dead concerning the having of children, Abraham and Sarah.

God's will and love lay behind the choice of Israel. God certainly did not choose Israel because he foresaw Israel would exercise faith and obedience. For he repeatedly characterizes the Israelites as a stiff-necked people.

Exodus 32:9 33:3 and 5, 34:9 Deuteronomy 9:6 and Deuteronomy 13:10, 16 31, 27 One more time. Exodus 32:9 33:3 33:5 34:9 Deuteronomy 9:6 and 13:10, 16 31, 27 Oh, Nehemiah 9:16 and 17 as well. Stephen speaks of his contemporaries as well as his forebears.

Quote, you stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears. Uncircumcised ears? You are always resisting the Holy Spirit as your ancestors did you do also. Acts 7:51 Paul is scripture's most prolific teacher of the election of Christians.

And he situates its basis in God's love and will. Three examples will suffice. First, in Ephesians 1 we learn that God chose us in love.

He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ. According to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace. Before I look at the details in Ephesians 1, we should look at Ephesians 1. The three great election passages deserve our attention before we draw theology out of them.

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one big sentence in Greek. I learned years ago from Herman Ridderbos in a book, which is very important to me. Paul, an outline of his theology.

To divide this great passage into three sections. According to the prepositional refrain, verse 6, to the praise of his glorious grace. Verse 12, towards the end, to the praise of his glory.

And at the very end of the passage, to the praise of his glory. If we do that, we have three, and I'll call them paragraphs. The first paragraph highlights the work of God the Father.

The second one, the Son, is the only place redemption is mentioned. The third is the only place the Holy Spirit is mentioned. Father, verses 1:6.

Son, 7:12. Holy Spirit, 13:14. Not only so, but Paul assigns works of salvation to each of the three Trinitarian persons.

The Father's work is election, which is resumed down there in verse 11. The Son's work is redemption through his blood, in that middle paragraph. And the Holy Spirit is the Father's agent in sealing the people of God.

He's the seal, the Holy Spirit is not the sealer. The Father is the sealer, who seals our union in the Son. And the seal given to us is the Holy Spirit.

Father, Son, Spirit, election or predestination, redemption, sealing. Within this framework, we see, among other things, Trinitarian harmony. The Father chooses a people, and the Son redeems a people.

The Father seals those same people who believe with the Holy Spirit of God. Back to our notes, back to our lecture material. In Ephesians 1, we learn that God chose us.

In love, he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace. A few verses later, he says, in Christ we've also received an inheritance, verse 11, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will. Paul's teaching is unambiguous.

God chooses based on his love, verse 4. In love, he predestined us for adoption. God chooses us based on the purpose of his will. Once again, that same word, purpose, that we found in 2 Timothy 1:9. Prothesis.

As a matter of fact, verse 11 is as strong as any verse in the Bible. In him, we've obtained an inheritance, having been predestined, and get a load of this, according to the purpose of him, who works all things according to the counsel of his will. Whew! Election is according to the will, the purpose, the plan, the counsel of God.

And it is based on love. Reflecting the Old Testament antecedent, God's purpose and love was the reason he chose Israel out of all the nations. Is it fair of God to do that? God was under obligation to choose no nation.

Furthermore, ultimately, his plan in choosing one was to bring salvation to the world. Now, Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles, a better one than it was. And so, we only have hints in the Old Testament of some Egyptians coming out of the exodus with Israel.

Of Jonah reluctantly going to Nineveh. Of Rahab and her family at the time of the destruction of Jericho. Just hints of such things.

But Isaiah predicts, and the book of Acts fulfills, God's plan for the Messiah and his people to be a light to the nations. In the New Testament, it is the new Israel, Jesus, and then his twelve disciples, no accident, twelve, replacing the twelve tribes, and the Christian church, the new Israel, the Israel of God, Galatians 6, bringing the gospel to the whole world. Romans 8 is another great election passage.

And I just need to work somewhat with the context of these great passages before continually going back and drawing theology out of them. Romans 8, 18 through 39, is the strongest biblical passage, bar none, on God's preservation of his saints. We will visit that passage later in these lectures for the doctrine of preservation or eternal security.

For now, we want to see Romans 8:28 through 30. We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified.

Those whom he justified, he also glorified. 8:28 is justly famous. We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

All things in context mean present trials, sufferings, and struggles in the verses that precede. Verse 18, I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. 4, verse 29, begins with this conjunction for, gar, which here is causal. How do 29 and 30 demonstrate that all things work together for good? The answer is something like this.

We are confident that God works all things for the good of his people, those who love him because he has worked for them the greatest good from beginning to end. The *summum bonum*, the greatest good imaginable, their salvation.

And here specifically, God is the author of five past tense verbs in the unspecified or aorist tense. God foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. God is the subject, the author.

These five verbs each mean saved. Oh, but there are nuances between them. Surely, foreknown is different than glorified.

Although they are all speaking of salvation, and what is the object of these verbs? Whom he foreknew goes all the way through. It's the same object.

Whom he foreknew, he also predestined. Those whom he predestined, he also called. I forgot the literary device that is the name for this.

Judy Gundry Wolfe, Miroslav Wolfe's wife. *Paul and Perseverance*, an amazingly good book on perseverance. Highlights this feature of language where it goes back and then forward.

Like this, those whom he predestined go back. These, he also called, go forward.

Those whom he called go back. These also make a link. The Puritans called it the golden chain, and that's not really too bad.

That's pretty close. It is a speech figure called climax. Climax, that's it.

Blas de Brunner and Funk, we'll verify that. Standard Greek grammar, Blas de Brunner and Funk. Climax, it goes back and grabs and goes forward.

What it shows is the continuity of the subject that is spoken about. Or the object that is spoken about. Here, God verbs his people.

God, and not just verb, verbed his people. God foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified his people. God is the author of each verb.

They're all in the past tense. Astonishingly, glorified, which is surely the future for the Romans when they receive this letter, is also put in the past tense. Like I say, this is the strongest preservation passage.

Why do you say it? Because of proofs like that. But also, the whole passage is a sustained meditation on preservation. That's why it's so powerful.

It's not just a verse that teaches it, which would be good. The whole passage uses four different arguments. The first one is God's plan.

Those whom God foreknew, he predestined. They're, sorry, he foreknew, he glorified. Their glorification is so certain that God can put it in the simple past tense, along with the other verbs.

Foreknew, couldn't that fit the Armenian notion, God foreknew their faith? No, because for each verb, the subject is God, and the people of God are the object. That is, the semantic relations are between God as knower and his people as known. The background for this is our text, where God says he knew Israel out of all the nations on the earth.

It's a good verse in Amos that I've lost. Sorry. You alone have I known of all the nations on the earth.

Didn't God know the other? Yes, he did. Intellectually, in terms of cognition, he knew, but he didn't set his love on all of them. Oh, he did in a sense of common grace, giving them rain and sunshine and blessing and the blessing of family life and so forth.

But he didn't enter into a covenant with them and save them like he did with Israel. So, it's God foreloved his people, as we will see later. Those whom he foreloved, he predestined, he chose for salvation.

Those whom he predestined, he called, he effectively summoned to himself through the preaching of the gospel. Those he justified, he declared righteous in the sight of God and men, based upon the righteousness of Christ. And those whom he justified, he glorified.

The future glorification of believers in which they will behold the glory of Christ. They will participate in it and be changed, be transformed by it. Do I understand what I'm talking about? Hardly.

It is too wonderful to even understand fully. But we will see the glory of God without being exterminated. We will partake of the glory to come and we will be transformed into glorified human beings with bodies glorified, fitted for everlasting life on the new earth with all the people of God.

Let me do Romans 9 while I'm at it. We need to be aware of these passages and their context in order to draw the theology out of them. Romans 9 is the *textus classicus*, the classical text for the doctrine of election or predestination.

The occasion for Romans turns out to be important. The pilgrims at Pentecost, according to Acts 2, included Jews from Rome. Many of them were saved, too, as they heard the gospel supernaturally preached in their language and brought the gospel back.

Like every other Christian church at the very beginning, it was no doubt a Hebrew Christian church in Rome. In time, however, the Gentiles believed and they

outnumbered the Jews in their own church. And that caused trouble, according to Romans chapter 14.

Paul actually takes the Jewish believers to task. Well, the Gentile and the Jewish believers are to the task. The Gentile believers, especially because he's an apostle to the Gentiles and the Gentiles predominate, and they were being inconsiderate, is the right adjective for their Jewish brothers.

They were enjoying their shrimp and weenie roasts on Friday night, scandalizing the Jewish Christians. You can eat your shrimp and hot dogs all you want and your bacon, Paul says, but don't do it in front of your brothers, and don't do it on Friday night publicly. Do it privately.

And they not only were worshiping the Lord on Sunday. I mean, they were only worshiping the Lord on Sunday. They had no respect for the Jews observing the Jewish Sabbath, the new moon and other Jewish festivals, Passover, and so forth.

The Gentiles rightly did not have to participate in those things, but they should have been more respectful, Paul says, of their Jewish brothers, who ironically were the weaker brothers. Thus, we understand better why, in this book, starting with the thematic statement in chapter 1, verses 16 and 17, repeatedly, Paul says to the Jew and to the Greek Paul is trying to heal. Oh, he's got multiple purposes for Romans, and it turns out to be a systematic treatise, but it's a contextualized systematic treatise.

Oh, it's his introduction to the church in Rome, where he had not been. It expresses his desire to come and visit them. He wants to bring them a spiritual gift.

He does set forth as systematically as anywhere in his writings so many important Christian teachings. But he's also trying to heal a church that is rent along ethnic lines. Verse Romans 14: 10.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Why do you despise your brother? Therefore, 14:13, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. You don't want to celebrate the Passover. That's your own business, but don't make a deal about that in front of your Jewish Christian brothers in your church.

That is wrong. You're stumbling over them. And you can eat what you want, when you want.

Jesus declared all foods clean. But don't scandalize your brothers. Do not, verse 20, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God.

Everything, indeed, is clean. And if the Jewish Christians still want to keep kosher laws, that's their business. But it's wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats.

It is not Christian liberty if you have to do it and you stumble over other believers. I love Romans 15:17. It is one of my... It's a very important verse to me.

Romans 15:5 through 7. Did I say 17? Sorry, 5 through... May the God of endurance, Romans 15:5, and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, Jews and Gentiles in Rome, in accord with Christ Jesus. That together you may, with one voice, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God.

You may have strong theological convictions. It should be pretty obvious to you that I do. But one of those convictions is a doctrine of the unity of the church.

Ephesians 4, there's one church, and we're to preserve that unity. One of those convictions is a doctrine of love. Believers are to love and accept one another, Romans 15:7, as Christ accepted us.

So, yeah, keep your strong theological convictions in proper proportion. Some things are more important than other things. And if I cannot give the right hand of fellowship to a fellow believer, even if we disagree on minor things, even if we disagree on some things that are near to my heart but are not the gospel and the most important things, then something is wrong with me, and my doctrine is not as pure as I would like to think it is, because the Bible has a doctrine of love, of fellowship, of peace, of unity with other believers, and so forth.

Good grief, I write books defending Calvinism, but my goal is to treat those with whom I disagree, who know the Lord, as fellow believers in Christ and be loved by Him. In any case, the Jewish Christians, save the Pentecost, came back to Rome and established a Hebrew Christian church in time. Give them credit, they accepted the Gentile believers, and that was hard for them because these people had very different ways.

I mean, they were pagans. This is tough. Do you see what those people eat? And so forth.

They don't look like us. I mean, what's going on? This is tough. Hey, they know Jesus. They're part of us. But in time, they outnumbered the Jews, so in Romans 11, Paul could say, I write to you Gentiles, it's a predominantly Gentile Christian church, with some Jews.

What was their church has now become a church, and they are a minority, the Jews. And so, is the Jewish Christians have a legitimate beef? A legitimate question. Respectfully, they ask God, Romans 9:6 reflects this.

Lord, good grief, dear Lord, Israel was once the only people of God. And we have believed in Jesus, and we're glad, but has the word of God to Israel failed? Lord, we ask it respectfully. That is in their hearts, anyway.

And in 9:1 through 5, Paul celebrates the great blessings of being an ethnic Israelite. Verse 5, to them, belong to the patriarchs. Not to the Gentiles did God give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And from their race, the Jewish race, blood descendants of Abraham and Sarah, as miraculous as that was, according to the flesh, is the Christ, the promised one, the Messiah, whose God over all, forever blessed, amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. I'm trying to set this context historically because it's important.

And it helps us understand Romans 9, 10, and 11, which are so important for understanding, well, many, many things. Let me answer that question. Or let me explain Paul's expression.

It is not as though the word of God has failed. ESV. Because he gives three different answers, obviously complementary answers.

This is the word of God in Romans 9, 10, and 11. In a nutshell, the word of God has not failed, Romans 9. God saved those Jews whom he sovereignly chose to save. Well, that nullifies human responsibility, right? It doesn't matter what we do, right? Wrong.

Chapter 10. The word of God did not fail. Unbelieving Israel got exactly what it deserved for its unbelief.

God justly holds them responsible for their rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. Whew. Wow.

Do you mean these truths are complementary in some way? Yes. Is there not an order to them? Yes, there's an order to them. God is God.

God is first. But God's absolute sovereignty does not. My goodness.

It couldn't be stronger than absolute sovereignty. Does not the maker have the right to make what kind of vessels he wants? Who are you to answer back to God, old man? Whew. Good grief.

It is so strong. But it does not undermine genuine human responsibility. As John Frame reminds us in his outstanding systematic theology book, obviously, biblically, accountability and responsibility do not always entail ability.

This is the book in which Paul teaches original sin. The world is condemned in Adam's original sin, Romans 5, 12 to 19. This is the book in which Paul, before he gets into grace and sovereignty and predestination, good grief, that's back here in chapter 9, 1:18 to 3:20.

The world is brought to its knees before God for its sins. God's word didn't fail, Romans 9. God sovereignly chose whom he wanted to save, Jew and Gentile. God's word didn't fail, chapter 9. Unbelieving Israel got exactly what it deserved for its unbelief.

God's word didn't fail, chapter 11. God is not yet done with ethnic Israel. Because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, he doesn't take them back.

Oh, it's problematic. It is problematic. Because Israel, first century Israel ongoing, stands in an anomalous relationship to God, Romans 11: 28.

As regards the gospel, Israelites are enemies of God for the sake of you Gentiles to whom the gospel has come. As regards election, they are beloved. Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a second.

They're enemies, and they're beloved? Exactly. Romans 11:28. As regards the gospel, Jews are enemies for your sake, you Gentiles.

As regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For, another explanatory gar, the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Does this guarantee a future for the nation of Israel? Good people disagree.

I don't think necessarily so. I think it guarantees God's going to save many Israelites, according to the flesh. Israel means the same thing it does in Romans 9-11.

Blood descendants of Abraham and Sarah. Ethnic Israelites. So, is there still a future for Israel? I believe so.

And from another deal, from the realm of eschatology, one of my conclusions is that every major theme of last things is already and not yet. It is fulfilled in part now, and fulfilled fully at the end. Toward the end.

Toward the time of the eschaton, the second coming and surrounding event, and concurrent events. How does that apply to this, and so all Israel will be saved business? In Romans 11:26, all of Israel will be saved.

Here's how it applies. My understanding is that all of Israel will be saved. I should do it in context.

Lest you be wise in your own sight, 11:25. I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And in this way, all Israel will be saved. I take it to mean ethnic Israelites, descendants of Abraham and Sarah. And it is like every other major eschatological theme, already and not yet.

That is, Jews are being saved in between the comings of Christ. But I do think there will be a great harvest of Jewish believers around the time of the return of Christ. The last, last days, if you will.

So, to summarize, before we actually get back to the doctrine of election, I just think it's important. Romans 9, 10, and 11 deal with the same problem. Have God's promises to Israel fallen by the wayside? Of course not.

That would reflect poorly on the Lord God himself. No, God's promises haven't failed. And the divine potter has saved exactly whom he chose to save.

Among the Jews especially, but also the Gentiles. According to chapter 9. No, God's promises haven't failed. And just as in the whole Old Testament story, in Jesus and the Gospels, and in the book of Acts.

Here, Israel gets what it deserves for its unbelief. It pursued righteousness. But it did not do it by faith, but rather by law.

And Christ is the end of a law for righteousness to everyone who believes. But Israel had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. And by and large, they rejected their Messiah.

And they reaped what they sowed for that unbelief. God holds them responsible. Here is theological compatibilism.

Absolute divine sovereignty, Romans 9. Genuine human responsibility, Romans 10. They're both true. There's an order.

God is first. Our responsibility is second. And I hold them in tension because that's the way the Bible does it.

Has God's promise to Israel failed? No. Chapter 11. He is now saving Israelites who believe.

And he will do so because his gifts and his calling are irrevocable. He doesn't go back on them.

He will yet bring many Israelites to salvation. Within this framework, chapter 9, I should work with the flow of thought a little bit because it is powerful.

It is not as though the word of God has failed, 9:6. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. They are not all children of Abraham because they are his offspring.

But through Isaac shall your offspring be named. This means it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. Aha! Couldn't this fit the Arminian system? God foresees the promise.

Sometimes, the word promise in the New Testament means the gospel, right? Right. So, is it saying here that God made the promise, and God foresees who believes the promise, and he chooses them? No. The next line shows what he means by promise.

Here's the promise. This is what the promise said about this time next year. I'll return, and Sarah will have a son. The promise is a divine fiat.

A word of God that came true despite Sarah's laughing at God. Oh, God got the last word and named the kid Yitzhak. He laughed.

God is merciful, is he not? So not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they had not yet been born or done anything good or bad, in order that God's promise of election might continue, not because of works, but because of him who calls, she was told, the older will serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob, I love thee, so I hate it. What Paul is doing is he's giving a brief review of important aspects in redemptive history, and his point is God sovereignly acts as he will.

His promise to Israel didn't fail. He took a couple as good as dead when it came to bearing children, and from them, he brought Isaac. God's sovereign promise he fulfilled sovereignly.

Furthermore, in the next generation, before Jacob and Isaac were born, God sovereignly said, I'm going to choose this one and not that one. Specifically, Paul says, in order that God's purpose in election might stand. Paul anticipates human objections.

Verse 14, what shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? How can he choose one and not the other before they were born? Answer: by no means. You don't understand the divine prerogative. It's already in the book of Exodus, for he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

This is a place to show. I'm going to get my ducks in a row. Romans 9, Romans 9, 15.

Yes, the pronouns are singular. Here is an example. Granted, most of the Bible's audiences are churches, so election is plural.

But here, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I'll have compassion on whom I have compassion. Those are singular pronouns. The whoms, the word whom is singular each time.

So then, it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. Specifically, human will is ruled out. I thought God chose us based upon our using our will to believe in his, no, no, no.

Salvation does not depend on human will or human exertion. Literally, it says it is not. Therefore, it is not of the one who wills, nor of the one who runs, but of the mercy showing God, but of the God who shows mercy. Willing is plain enough.

It's not of human volition, not of the act of human, exercising human volition. The one who runs, it's a metaphor for exertion of action. I am 73 years old. I used to jog. I used to run. I used to jog. Now I walk. I call it fast. You may not call it fast.

If you're the young whippersnappers, I think many of you are. But guess what? I love it. It feels good.

It keeps me going. And still, it's a form of exertion, at least for this older fellow. Not of the one who wills is clear enough.

Not of salvation is not a matter of human will, nor of human running, that is, the showing, the exercising of human energy, exerting oneself, but salvation is of the God who shows mercy because we need it. Then Paul moves to another vignette in redemptive history, where Pharaoh and the Israelites are in bondage. The Lord says to Pharaoh, for this very purpose I've raised you up, that I might show my power in you and my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

So, then, God has mercy on whom? I'm sure it's still singular, but I have occasionally made mistakes, and I don't want to do that. The verse is 18. Singular again.

Whom and whom? He has mercy on whomever he wills and he hardens whomever he wills. Sometimes election is of individuals.

God has mercy. As a matter of fact, there's a progression here. Up above it was that he had mercy and compassion for whom he would.

Now it's a positive and a negative. He has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. The emphasis here is not on human will, specifically denying that it's a man who wills, but it's on the divine prerogative.

God is the Lord. The Lord saves in this context. And again, systematic strength is, it focuses on something.

It's weaknesses it focuses on something. You could be a hyper-Calvinist so easily from Romans 9. Don't! It's in the midst of a book that extols the gospel. Good grief.

The whole purpose, Romans 1:16, 17, is that the theme of the book is the gospel. Romans 10, whosoever believes in the Lord will be saved—an extensive passage on the gospel in Romans 10, the necessity of preaching, and so forth.

So don't become a hyper-Calvinist. Please, just become a balanced Calvinist. That's all.

So, and again, I love both verses 14 and 19. They show me that my reading is basically right because it calls forth these objections. God has mercy on whoever he wants, and he hardens whomever he wants.

Wait a second! Whoa! You mean, does he mean that? The objection makes sense exactly in that reading. You'll ask me then why he still finds fault. Who can resist his will? That's a beautiful objection, showing we have understood it correctly. The verse is to strongly underline the divine prerogative in these matters.

Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Paul says, sit down and shut up. You don't have the right to... Oh, if I were God, I would... Boy, I can't stand when somebody says that. Oh, who do we think we are? Surely, we need to be put in our place.

We don't tell God what to do. It doesn't matter what we would do if we were... Good grief. We are creatures, fallen creatures.

If we're saved, it's by the grace of God. Will what is molded say to its molder, why have you made me like this? Has the potter no right? He keeps using these rhetorical questions. There's no doubt as to the answers.

He uses Greek particles, indicating positive answers. Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use, another for dishonorable? He does, does he not, implied in the negative particle. So, God sovereignly showed his will with Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Esau.

God sovereignly showed his will with Pharaoh and the Israelites. God sovereignly shows... Now we get actually down to the nitty-gritty. Oh, he was talking about it before in order for the purpose of God and election to stand.

But now, explicitly, explicitly. What if God, desiring to show his wrath and make his power known, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory? Whoa. Oh, it's just hypothetical.

It just says, what if he did it? Well, it is a rhetorical question again. And it is not hypothetical, as verse 24 shows. Because of the vessels of mercy, he identifies with first-century human beings.

Even us, vessels of mercy, prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from among the Gentiles. Here, Paul connects election or predestination with calling.

Those whom God chose, he summoned to himself through the gospel. It's one of a number of places that we'll see when we study calling. We'll probably see it as we keep studying election, too.

Where God connects both his choosing and his drawing, it's John's way of talking about calling people to himself. My friends, like it or not, God, the divine potter, has vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy.

Is there a... Does God stand behind the fate of every human being? My answer is not based on some philosophy I want to hold. But based upon the revelation of God. Not only here, but another... John 10, 1 Peter 2 come to mind.

We'll see it later on. My answer is yes. He stands behind people who go to heaven.

Yes. He stands behind people who go to hell. Yes.

There are vessels of wrath that are prepared beforehand for destruction. There are vessels of mercy prepared beforehand for glory. Does he stand behind them both ultimately? Yes.

Ultimately, does he stand behind them equally? My answer is no. And I would appeal to the grammar. The vessels of mercy he has prepared beforehand.

Active voice. Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction which have been prepared.  
It's passive.

Am I denying that God does both election and reprobation? I am not. Am I saying that is ultimately the Bible statement concerning the fate of every... Yes. Are they equal? Equally ultimate? Yes.

Are they equal? No. Here's my own construal of these things before we conclude this lecture. If you ask me why somebody is saved, I would say the most immediate... I go from the immediate to the ultimate, and all these answers are biblical and true.

Someone is saved because they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. True? Yes.  
Ultimate? No.

They believed on Christ because the Holy Spirit opened up their hearts. Does that nullify their faith? No. It actually establishes and enables their faith.

Is that the ultimate answer? No. Christ died and arose to save those people. Does that nullify the Holy Spirit? No.

The Holy Spirit takes... He illuminates the people when they hear the gospel. Does it illuminate their faith? No. They believe that Jesus died and rose again.

They're saved because they believed. Because the Holy Spirit worked. Because Jesus worked.

Ultimately, in ways not completely understandable to us, they were saved because they were God's vessels of mercy, which he had prepared beforehand for glory before the creation of the world. Does that negate what Jesus did? Are you kidding me? Jesus came to do the Father's will. Does that negate what the Spirit did? Are you kidding me? The Trinity works in harmony.

Does that election make our faith a fiction? No, it doesn't make our faith a fiction. And when God saved me as a 21-year-old, I knew it was all of his grace. Yes, I truly believed in him.

And he turned my life inside out for good. But I knew... I didn't understand all this business. But I knew he had ultimately chosen me.

I couldn't explain why. Let's go to the other side. People are lost.

Why? The immediate answer is... for their sins. If you study the hell passages and believe me, I have. Compare my hell on trial and hell under fire.

I'll just stop. Two views of hell. That's enough.

I've done more than that, unfortunately, or fortunately. I've studied those passages. People go to hell for their sins.

Is that the ultimate biblical... Yes, they have to believe the gospel to be saved. But they don't go to hell for not believing the gospel. They go to hell, whether they've heard the gospel or not, for their sins.

Every hell passage says it. Sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. Is that the ultimate biblical statement? No.

The Bible teaches Adam's original sin most plainly in Romans 5:12-19. Does Adam's original sin nullify my actual sins, as we call them? Not according to Paul.

Romans 1-18-3-20, he gives a long dissertation on actual sins, before he gets around to original sin in chapter 5. Oh, come on! There'd be no actual sins without original sin, right? Right. Doesn't the one rule out the other? Not according to the apostle. Not according to God.

That's good enough for me. I never said theology isn't mysterious, that we have all the answers. Our job is to try to understand what God has said as best as we can.

With a humble spirit, acknowledging we don't know it all. Somebody's lost for their sins. Somebody's lost for Adam's sin.

Ultimately, people are lost because they are vessels of wrath prepared for destruction by a sovereign potter. Whoo! Is that true? Yes. Was that before creation? Yes.

Is it the same as choosing people for salvation? No, because he is proactive in choosing people for salvation. If he didn't choose us, we would never have believed. Concerning the lost, he merely has to pass over them.

Is it not a decision on his part? It is. It's inscrutable. I don't understand it.

It's according to his own holiness and justice. Could he not have done that for everybody? Yes. Didn't he owe the fact? Didn't he owe it to save everybody? No.

But he passed over many, and that is the ultimate ground of their condemnation. Does that nullify Adam's fall? Not according to Genesis 3. Not according to the rest of the Old Testament. Not according to Romans 5 and the rest of the New Testament.

Does any of that nullify people's unbelief? Study the ten famous hell passages that teach eternal punishment. If I know one thing in the Bible, I know this. It does not nullify the fact that human beings will go to hell for their sins.

Next time, in our next lecture, we will pick it up and continue. After surveying these great texts, we'll pick up the systematic theology based on them.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on salvation. This is session 7, Election Systematic Formulations, Number 2.