Paul's understanding and use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11


Abstract

This thesis contends that Paul is wholly consistent in his understanding and use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11. Drawing upon both Old Testament teaching and a double predestinarian tradition finding its most coherent and reasoned expression in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Paul employs the concept of election in Romans 9 to demonstrate how God may be considered faithful to His covenant with Israel. At present, the Creator honors His word by selecting out of ethnic Israel those whom He has predestined as children of promise. These comprise true Israel, and are recognized in Paul's day as Jews embracing Jesus as Messiah. Along with believing Gentiles, they constitute the "vessels of mercy predestined to eschatological glory." The remainder of Israel is hardened into unbelief, and viewed as "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction." Thus, in Romans 9 Paul dismisses a purely nationalistic concept of election in favor of an Israel formed by God's sovereign election of individuals to salvation. Romans 11, however, seems to overrule this individualized perspective of election. Paul declares that God has not completely or finally rejected unbelieving, ethnic Israel. As a corporate entity, through the existence of 'the remnant' she enjoys the continuity of both a theocratic and soteriological election. Although most of his contemporary, unbelieving kinsmen have not been chosen to salvation, Paul holds firmly to the mystery that at the close of the age God will bring future Israel into His mercy. Here, at the consummation of history, God's individualized, electing purpose (Rom 9) and His corporate election of all Israel (Rom 11) dovetail, and God is fully glorified as both Jew and Gentile are rescued from disobedience solely through the sovereign, elective mercy of God.

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Thus, Romans 9-11 should be understood in terms of the mediation of the election-bestowing glory of God through Paul’s gospel and ministry. We have also discovered that Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions surrounding Exodus 32:32 and its broader context treat themes that are highly relevant to Paul’s argument in Romans 9-11. We have seen concepts of corporate solidarity and covenant at work in Paul’s approach to Scripture, and this supports the contention that Paul’s hermeneutic was ecclesiocentric. Typology appears to be the most fundamental interpretive strategy Paul employed, and to a degree that has seldom been fathomed. In Romans 9-11, Paul explains that God’s purposes for Israel did not fail, and for the most part, Israel herself did not fail. Nevertheless, if we understand what happened to Israel, we will then be better able to protect the church from something similar happening to us. Jacob and Esau in Romans 9. Paul uses the image of the potter and the clay from Jeremiah 18 as his third example of how election works. There are numerous interpretive issues with this portion of Paul’s argument, which I explain in more detail in my book, The Re-Justification of God. Paul returns to discuss election in Romans 11. Here are the pertinent texts: Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:5). What then? Is Paul promoting unconditional election in 9:6-13? I think not. My paper exposes some of the fallacies in Calvinist thinking, exhibited pre-eminently in John Piper's scholarly work, "The Justification of
This paper proposes the Pauline text in Romans 9-11 as a possible source of inspiration for new hymnographic creations inside the Orthodox liturgy. The text is part of the broader debate on the anti-Judaism of the Byzantine liturgical more. This paper seeks to give an account for Paul’s use of the verb καλεω and to show how the word contributes to Paul’s argument in Rom 9:6-29. My argument is that Paul has developed a specialized use of καλεω that draws on his exegesis of more.