

## Romans #20 - Predestination Problems Unfair?

- We're gonna talk about predestination, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and homosexuality. So your all, if you're not offended, just wait, it's coming, okay? And I just wanna thank in advance all the social media platforms for banning me in Jesus' name. I'll pray and we'll get into Romans 9. Father God, thank you that I get to pastor these dear people who I love with my whole heart and God I thank you that they make it really easy to love them, really easy to lead them and really easy to like them. And God, we wanna be under your word, we wanna be obedient, we wanna hear from our father and we wanna be faithful sons and daughters. So Holy Spirit, we invite you to guide and guard our time together. As we open your word, we pray you would open our hearts and minds so that we can understand your word and love Jesus in his name we pray. All God's people say, amen. All right, we're in Romans 9. And what happens in Romans 9-10, Paul is telling us how we have a relationship with God. And you may not know this, that God had you in his heart and on his mind before he made the world. That God knew that you were coming and he knew that you would be sinning and he knew that he would be saving. And God had this eternal plan for you that he implemented in history. Knowing this in Romans 9-10, Paul anticipates five questions or objections and he answers them. This week we'll deal with number two and three, and we'll deal with the rest in the ensuing weeks. And the question is this, is God unjust and or unfair to not choose everyone for salvation? If God chooses and some go to heaven and some go to hell, is it wrong of God not to choose everyone? So let me start with two stories from my childhood to sort of set this up. When I was a little kid, I went to a birthday party and it was one of the first birthday parties I remember going to as a kid. And the friend of mine was opening their presents and they had a younger brother who was watching them open the presents. And you could tell that the younger child didn't understand how birthdays work on birthdays, who gets a present. Just the birthday boy or girl, not everybody, not everybody, okay? And so the little kid didn't understand 'cause their bigger brother was opening the gift and they kept opening gifts. And the little kid is thinking, this is not fair. How come they get all the gifts? So at one point the younger kid, grabbed one of the gifts. So that's a socialist grab this other kid's gift, grabbed the other kid's gift and said, that's not fair. Was that unfair that they didn't get a gift? No, 'cause it's not their birthday, it's not their birthday. On another occasion, I was sitting in class, public school, sitting next to a kid who for sure was not gonna be the valedictorian, was not doing well. And sitting next to that kid, was a girl who was for sure, gonna be the valedictorian, really smart girl. Shelley's won the spelling bee, the rest of us, we didn't even try. So she finished her work early on a test and went to the bathroom and she left her test and the kid who was not the valedictorian, took her test, put his name on her test. He was a politician. And then, he put her name on his test and he turned them in. The teacher graded the test, and then the girl got the test back, realized it was not her test. She said that's not fair. Is that true? It was not fair, it was not fair. See, something is unfair or unjust when you've earned something and it's taken from you. She had earned that grade, it was taken from her. It is not unjust or unfair if you don't receive something that you don't deserve. The little kid with a birthday present, they didn't deserve a birthday present it wasn't their birthday. Just because you don't get something doesn't

mean it's unjust or unfair, it all depends on whether or not you had owed it or whether you have earned it. That being said, we're gonna jump into Romans 9, starting in verse 14. Here's the first question, is God unjust to choose some people for salvation and not others? Okay, let me tell you this, some people are going to heaven, some people are going to hell. Some people told me they're like, believe in hell. Well, you will. We all will. Some of us are just a little earlier to the learning. What shall we see then? Is there injustice on God's part? Is that unjust? Is it unjust? What by, no means for he says to Moses, we're gonna go to the Old Testament. I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it depends not, not on human wealth, not on works, not on religion, not on morality, not on performance, not on karma or exertion, but on God. You're saved by God, you're saved from God, you're saved to God, you're saved for God. If you see a theme there, it's about God who has mercy. For the scripture says to Pharaoh, God in the Old Testament will deal with him for this very purpose I have raised you up that I might show my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he has mercy on whomever he wills and he hardens whomever he wills. Okay, what he says is this, salvation is nothing that you earn or even contribute to in any way. This has been one of the dominant of Romans all the way up until this point. And what tends to happen is we think, okay, God did his part, what's my part? Well, let me tell you this, your part is sinning, his part is saving. See we contribute the bad news, the sinning, he contributes, the good news, the saving. And within this, the way that God brought the world into existence is something called the ex nihilo. In Genesis, it says that God made the world, it says in Hebrews that he made the world out of nothing. What does God need to do something? Nothing. The way that God forms creation, is the way that God forms salvation. He needs nothing, he brings nothing, he brings it himself. Meaning when God created the world, he had nothing, he brought everything out of nothing. When he saves, you bring nothing, he brings everything. Now, some people will say that this is too easy to believe. I think it's very hard, because it requires humility. It's saying I come to God with my hands empty and I receive a gift called salvation. I don't come with one handful, to participate or contribute or two hands full to earn a merit. It's a gift, and I receive it as a gift. You and I contribute nothing. This is the difference between works based and grace based belief systems. In works based release systems, your karma is that you die, reincarnate, pay off your debt or you go to purgatory and pay it back, or your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds. In Christianity, you do nothing, Jesus does everything. And you're not saved by your works, you're saved by his works. And your works don't contribute to his works. Because Jesus plus anything, ruins everything. It's only always totally, exclusively the work of Jesus. And he's gonna use a few case studies here, the first is Egypt. And he goes all the way back to the Old Testament book of Exodus. And what he says is there's this guy named Pharaoh. Well Pharaoh was the ruler in Egypt. Let me give you the backdrop of Egypt. Everything that God creates, Satan counterfeits, God is creator, Satan is counterfeiter, God has a kingdom, and then Satan counterfeits it with different nations. And the Bible called this a world system. This is where economics, politics, religion, spirituality, ideology, education, all comes together into one unified system. In the Old Testament places like Babylon, we looked at that last year when we went through the book of Daniel. It includes in Paul's day in which he's writing the nation of Rome that existed in the Old Testament, in a nation called Egypt and it still exists today even in places like America, places like America, where everything is

working together against God, everything is working together against God. The most powerful nation in the days of the Old Testament was Egypt, and it was ruled by a king called the Pharaoh, and he was literally declared to be the son of the gods. So it was a counterfeit. So ultimately in their family, their kingdom was to replace God's kingdom and the son of the king was to replace Jesus Christ, the son of God and the King of Kings. It was all a demonic counterfeit. And what happens in this, the book of Exodus records, the conflict between God's kingdom and this counterfeit kingdom over the course of 40 years, it is the recording of the most supernatural activity in all of human history. And so within this, it's this conflict between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. It's ultimately this conflict between the real God and the false god. It's this conflict between that which is spiritual and of the Holy Spirit and that which is demonic and counterfeit. And so God's got real leaders and rulers, and Egypt's got counterfeits. There's real priests and there's pagan priests and there's angels at work and there's demons at work. And ultimately these kingdoms are in collision and conflict. This continues in every single age, including our own. It's why right now, if you come against God, you will get boosted on social media and if you come in the name of God, you will get throttled on social media. It's all spiritual and it's kingdoms in conflict continuously. And so what happens as well is that there are miracles and counterfeit miracles. Just because there's power doesn't mean it's God's power, it could be counterfeit and demonic power. So these two nations are in collision. And the ultimate fight is between this Pharaoh and the real God and the fight is over who the real God is. So what happens in Exodus 5:2, the Pharaoh who ruled and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and was worshiped as God, and he's the fake Jesus on earth. He says this, God shows up and God speaks and says, you are not the real king, I am, your kingdom is not the most powerful, mine is., you don't get to tell my people what to do, only I get to tell my people what to do and while I'm at it, I get to tell you what to do. Well, the demonic counterfeit, unbelieving king and kingdom was very unrelenting. So the Pharaoh says this in Exodus 5:2. Who is the Lord? Who is this God I never heard of? See, because what Pharaoh thought was, I'm powerful, God's people are powerless, I'm the king and they're the slaves, their God can't be bigger than me, I rule over them. He's like, who is this God I've never heard of? That I should obey his voice. Why should I let God tell me what to do? See, Pharaohs in America. I'm my own person, I'm my own authority, nobody could tell me what to do, okay? So ultimately, it continues, why should I obey his voice and let the people go? He says, I do not know the Lord. Ask your friends, do you know the Lord? It goes on and moreover, I will not let the people go. So here's the conflict, the Israelites are God's children, the way the story worked, at the end of Genesis, there was a famine and there was a season where God's people were in desperation. So they relocated and they took refuge in a nearby nation of Egypt. At that time, God had raised up one of his sons, man named Joseph to rule and reign in Egypt as a result, the remainder of his family and God's people, the nation of Israel, they were welcomed, they were welcomed into the nation of Egypt. They were there for about 400 plus years, upwards of 440 years. By the time you go from Genesis to Exodus, just those two books of the Bible, there's more than 400 years of a gap. And it says in Exodus that a king rose up who didn't remember, God's people, the family of Joseph. And what happened was God chose his people, he said, I make a decision. These are my kids, I'm adopting them, I'm their dad, I love them, I'm gonna bless them. As a result, they went from a nation of like 60, some 70 people to a nation of

millions. You need to know that that's why we are pro-life 'cause ours is a living God and we wanna birth people who love Jesus so that they are witnesses to his goodness in the future. This is why Satan is always trying to eradicate human life because God is always trying to multiply human life. And so what happens is this family becomes a nation of millions. This other Pharaoh rises up, and what he realizes is, these people could be a great economic opportunity. If I took all of their personal property and possessions, if I enslaved them, if I abuse them, I could really profit from them. So God made a decision that these were gonna be his people. Pharaoh, and ultimately Satan through Pharaoh, makes a decision that he is going to control, use, abuse, enslave these people. And now the conflict is, will it be God or the Pharaoh and ultimately Satan working through the Pharaoh who will win this conflict? That's the fight, that's the fight. And so when God sends Moses and says, let my people go. Pharaoh says, I don't know who you are, and these are my people, not yours. And God says, then here's what I'm gonna do, I'm going to set my people free, and I'm going to use Pharaoh as a statement to all of human history of who I am and who everyone else is. And so what you have here is you have a collision. It raises the issue then of Pharaoh's hard heart. How many of you are Christians and you've heard about this? How many of you have argued about this? In Bible college it's required that you argue about this for the first year. So God's gonna, God's going to crush Pharaoh and redeem his people, it's a picture of eternity. King Jesus is going to come back, he is going to crush everything that is in the world and he will liberate his people once and for all. The question is in the meantime, what about Pharaoh's hard heart? So here it is, he mentions the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. About 20 times in Exodus, it speaks of Pharaoh's hardness of heart. About 10 times, it says the God hardened his heart, about 10 times, it says the Pharaoh hardened his heart. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, there's the 10 times, Pharaoh hardened his own heart, there's the 10 times, so it's a tie. Okay, so there's a couple options. Some people would say, well, God hardened his heart, we would call them Calvinists. There's like, God hardened his heart, others would say no, no, no, he hardened his own heart, we call those Armenians. And some people would say, it says both, we would call them Christians, okay? So if you're a Christian and you read both, what you don't wanna do is say, I'm gonna take these verses, not those verses, all the verses go together and all the verses go together. So here's what we learned from the story. Number one, let me ask you this, did God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Yes. Okay, let me ask you another question, did Pharaoh hardened his heart? Yes okay so how many of you were like, this is like a fortune cookie, I'm not sure what to do with this, okay. Some would misrepresent this and they would see the God hardened his heart and then punished him for having a hardened heart. You could see where that would raise that question of injustice, injustice. This would be like a dad shoving a kid, the kid bumps the table, the milk falls over and then the dad disciplines the kid for spilling the milk. You're like, that's not just, that's abusive, you made that happen, how can you punish for what you cost? You see the problem? So ultimately the question is not, did God hardened Pharaoh's heart? But how did God hardened Pharaoh's heart? This is very important because it's ultimately connected to our view of God. If you think God is just mean, capricious, that he's haphazard, random, cruel. Number one, that's a God you're going to run from not run to in your time of need. In addition, it encourages you to treat other people the way that you think that God treats you. Men who think that God is controlling, distant, a bit mean, cruel, capricious, non-relational, and dangerous, make horrible husbands

and fathers. And sometimes they will even quote versus, out of context of course, saying, well, that's how God is, so that's how I am. Well, the truth is, you may not fully understand who God is therefore, you don't understand how you should be. Also in the book of Exodus, God tells us exactly who he is. It's in Exodus 32 and it is the verse in the Bible that is quoted more than any other verse in the Bible. You know what that means? This is the verse that God keeps highlighting. And it's him telling us exactly who he is. It says this, excuse me, it's Exodus 34:6-7. The Lord proclaimed, the Lord the Lord, a God. First thing, merciful, second thing, gracious, next thing, slow to anger. He's got along with God or short with God along with God. He doesn't wake up angry, you gotta get him there and you can. Abounding in steadfast love. You know what that means? Bottomless well of love and faithfulness. You can trust him because he's always faithful. The Bible says, even when we're faithless, he's faithful, you really can't depend on anyone or anything for the same category and degree, you can depend on this God, he's totally faithful. That's why, if you love Jesus, you die with a smile. You're gonna be all right. It goes on, keeping steadfast love for thousands, he's really generous with his love. Forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, he'll forgive anyone for anything. And he's gonna do that through the death of his son, Jesus Christ, who prayed on the cross father forgive them and then died to answer his own prayer. But, here's the end, who will by no means clear the guilty? Here's what God says, I love people, I'm super patient, I'll forgive anybody for anything but there is an end to my grace and there is a beginning to my justice. So when God tells us who he is, then we need to look at the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in light of the character of God. Two questions again, did God hardened Pharaoh's heart, yes or no? Yes, did Pharaoh harden his heart, yes or no? Yes, how did he do it? Through love, through grace, through mercy, through compassion, through patience, okay? Because in the book of Exodus, God raises up Moses as an intermediary and as a spokesman and as a prophet, 10 different times, 10 times, God says, Moses, go tell Pharaoh, let my kids go, and if he doesn't, tell him there's gonna be a plague, which is a consequence, a punishment, and each of the plagues is going to be more painful, I'm going to continue to increase the cost, to encourage him to obey me. 10 times, 10, 10 times, 10 times God sends Moses. Pharaoh, the real God tells you to stop enslaving and abusing his kids, he really loves those kids, and my father doesn't like you hurting his kids. So he's telling you, that if you don't let the kids go, here's the consequence that will ensue. Okay, back to our question of injustice or unfairness, is this unjust on God's behalf? No. 10 times the plague comes just like God said, because God's faithful. He's not only faithful in his grace, he's also faithful in his justice. If you don't do this, then this will happen. You didn't do this, therefore it's going to happen and it does happen. It culminates with the final and worst plague, which is the killing of the firstborn. Pharaoh, if you're gonna hurt my kids, you're gonna see hurt come to your kids. You have reaped what you have sown. Right, God will not be mocked. The Bible says we will reap what we sow. If you keep hurting my kids, this is going to affect your kids. And Pharaoh refuses, and as a result, death comes to the firstborn in, the first born male son in every household, the only exception are those whose doorways are painted with the blood of the lamb, that ultimately the people who had faith, that Jesus was coming is the lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world. They went into their home, they sacrificed a lamb, we now know what is Passover, this is where Passover comes from from our Jewish friends. That they would confess their sins, they would have the lamb without spot or blemish showing the

sinlessness of Jesus as their substitute, they were demonstrating faith and his coming salvation. They would then paint the doorposts to their home because our faith is to be something that we practice at home and something that we display publicly. Nobody gets in much trouble for being a faithful believer at home, it's when you go public that you get some problems. And then what happened was that death came into the nation and it literally passed over every home that was covered by the blood of the lamb. Because God gave them an opportunity to be spared and to be saved. And as God's children are ultimately liberated from Egypt, it says that some of the Egyptians came with them, they were converts who worshiped their God. 'Cause our God is loving, and gracious, and kind, and anybody who turns from sin and trust in him will be saved. Let me say this, God sending Moses 10 times with 10 plagues, we tend to look at this from the perspective of the Egyptians, and what happens is we get very judgmental about God. Oh, God's mean, God's cruel, God kills people, God in the Old Testament is very dark, it's very sad that it's so primitive. I look at it from God's perspective, let me tell you this, in as much as possible, always look at it from God's perspective, in a world, that's like, what about sympathy and compassion and empathy? It's like, okay, let's give some to God. In a world where everybody's like social justice, I'm like, what about cosmic justice? Like if we all wanna get the wrongs made right, doesn't God have that same right? I'm a father, I got five kids, I love them with all my heart, all my heart. If you were holding my kids hostage, abusing them and enslaving them, I would not come ask you to kindly let them go, 10 times. How many dads are with me? You know, I'm gonna watch a Liam Neeson movie, I'm gonna take notes, I'm gonna take notes. Then I'm gonna watch Rambo, I'm gonna take some more notes and we're gonna do one visit, that's what we're gonna do, late at night. 10 times, God is more patient than we are, God is more gracious than we are, God is more loving than we are, God is better than we are. We have no right to judge this God, God has every right to judge us all. So the way that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, love, grace, mercy, kindness, patience, compassion. Pharaoh, you're not God, you're not the Lord of your life, you're not a good person, you're a sinner, there's a real God and he has a real problem with you, but he's willing to forgive you, you need to repent to him, you need to apologize to him, you need to submit to him, you need to surrender to him. That made Pharaoh's heart harder and harder and harder. Do you know somebody like that? That the nicer God is, the harder they become. How many of you, you have someone who has just decided that they're your enemy, everything you do just makes it worse. Like, I love you, I hate you, don't say that. I'm like, okay, okay, what can I do? Nothing. Okay, okay, what can I say? Nothing. Well, here, here's a gift, I'm sorry, I wanna fix it. No, now I'm declaring war. When someone has decided that they're your enemy, everything you say and do seems like an act of war. And some people take this disposition toward God. God's like, I love you, harder in heart. I'll forgive you if you just admit you're wrong, harder in heart, I'm being patient but my wick will burn to its end, hardness of heart. The Puritans used to have a line, they were Christians some years ago. They said the same sun that melts the ice hardens the clay. See the son of God's love and grace, and mercy and forgiveness, if you have a tender heart, it melts your heart, if you have a hard heart, it bakes your heart. We all live in the desert, right? We all know what this looks like, right? You put some clay out in the sun and if you're new, many of you are new, June, July, August, I'm just telling you, we call those the beast of false prophet and the anti-Christ, those months they unleash hell. People say it's a dry heat, so is hell, it's still not comfortable. But we all know what

baked clay looks like, right? Some people's hearts are like that. More love, more grace, more mercy, more forgiveness, more patients, just bakes and hardens the clay, okay? So what this means is God hardens his heart, but God is good, Pharaoh is bad. And it's God's goodness, that exposes Pharaoh's badness, okay. He's gonna say this a little bit later in Romans 12. Bless those who persecute you. God did that with Pharaoh. Bless and do not curse, God blessed him, gave him time, gave him opportunity. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far it depends on you, live peaceably with all. God keeps sending Moses, hey Pharaoh, we can have peace here, we can all have peace, there is a way of peace, there is a Prince of Peace. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, and the children of God did not do that, but leave it to the wrath of God, God did pour out his wrath and avenge his children. For it is written vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord to the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink, for by doing so, you will heap burning coals on his head. That's coming up in Romans 12. What God does, is exactly that with Pharaoh, he just burns coals on his head, love, grace, mercy, kindness. 'Cause here's the deal, an unhealthy person, hates healthy things, an unloving person hates love, an unforgiving person hates forgiveness, an ungracious person hates grace. Question, we talked about Pharaoh's heart. How's your heart? How's your heart? How many of us really were just a little Pharaoh? The only difference between Pharaoh and us, is resources. You've got your house, he had a bigger house, you got the people that you boss around, he just had more people that he got to boss around, you have judgments of God and he just had more judgments of God, he wouldn't do what God told him to do, and you're not gonna do what God told you to do. He told us this earlier about some of our hearts in Romans 2:5 because of your heart, an impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous, judgment will be revealed. Let me tell you this friend, if you don't know Jesus, you have a hard heart and there is a day when God takes you down, just like he took down Pharaoh. And so we are here to tell you that the wrath of God is a real, real problem, it's actually your greatest problem. And you are no position to judge God but God is in every position to judge you. And the good news is that he judged us at the cross of his son, Jesus Christ, that he died in our place for our sins as our substitute and our savior. And that if we would give him sin, he would give us his son. And that God loves to give people new hearts, hearts that melt with his grace and his love and his mercy. And if you're a Christian, this is the miracle that God has done in you. And if you're not yet a Christian, this is the miracle that we're praying that the God of the Bible, the Holy Spirit would do in you, that ultimately it's a heart issue. Now, if you'd have asked Pharaoh in that day, he would have had a lot of reasons and excuses, why he hated God and all of them were wrong just as yours are, just as yours are. God is not unjust. God is loving, gracious, kind, merciful and compassionate, but just as he destroyed the nation of Egypt, he will destroy all the nations of the earth and one day his wrath will come and his grace will have come to an end. And so this is the day where you make the most important decision you'll ever make. Do I receive Jesus? Do I recognize my sin? Do I reject being the Pharaoh of my own life? Setting up my own little kingdom, making my own little slaves and rendering my own little verdicts. And will I submit, surrender, and serve the king, the Lord Jesus Christ? The next question that he has is, is God unfair to save some people and not others? The first is more of a judicial legal, the second is more of a personal and emotional question. Again, there are five

questions, we'll deal with these two this week and we'll continue next week. You will say to me then, why does he still find fault? Who can resist his wrath? If God chooses, how can he blame us if we weren't picked? But who are you? Oh, man, to answer back to God. See we're immediately all offended 'cause we're Americans. I'm very smart, and my voice needs to be heard. Nah. will what is molded say to the molder, Why have you made me like this? Has the potter no right over the clay? Where the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use. What if God desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience, vessels of wrath, God's been super patient, prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, those would be the believers for which he has prepared beforehand for glory, God chose you before the foundation of the world. Even assume he is called, not from the Jews only, but also the Gentiles, that's the rest of us, as indeed he says in Hosea is gonna quote some Old Testament scriptures, these are all in the sermon notes, this is in the study guide, this is in the free eBook. All my nerd friends, it's all there for you. Those who are not my people, I will call my people. God's like, I'm gonna adopt some kids in my family you weren't expecting. And her who was not beloved, I will call beloved. And in the very place where it was said to them, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God. And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel though the number of the sons of Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a lot of physical descendants, only a remnant of them, spiritual descendants, will be saved for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay. And as Isaiah predicted, if the Lord of hosts, the God who rules the angels and demons, had not left us offspring, we would have become, or been like Sodom and Gomorrah, okay? Let me just unpack all of this, there's a lot here. What he's saying is God judges people, but people have always felt free to judge God. So there's only two ways this works, God judges you, or you judge God. Right now, true or false in our world, there's a lot of judging of God. Made them male and female now spectrum, marriage is a man and woman no, I disagree. Well, there are laws, that are incontrovertible, that rule over all times, cultures, and people, and we disagree, laws are relative and morality is relative. Well only Jesus saves. No, no, all the religions save. You're a bad person, no, I'm a good person. We're judging God all the time, we're judging God all the time. The truth is either God judges us or we judge God and the truth is, if we judge God eventually, God comes and judges us for judging him. So our judging only goes for a little while, his judging goes forever. You need to know that. You've been lied to. I love you, my volume is not anger, it's passion. You're not the center of the universe, you're not the highest authority, you're not born good and right, you don't deserve heaven but hell, you are not irreplaceable, you are not a snowflake, you are not one of a kind, the world is not a better place because of you, the nations were not anticipating your birth to make it all better, you're the problem, it's all mine. Now, you're more aware of that. But it's true for all of us. See what we've done, we've replaced God with us. I'm good, I should be able to judge, I deserve things, it's a good thing I'm here, I'm part of the solution. No, we all need God, and God doesn't need any of us. And we all owe God, and God doesn't owe any of us. But if you start with you in the center of human history, there's no room for God. If you start with God in the center of human history, it's amazing that he adopts you and puts you on his lap like a dad who adopted a kid. The second thing that he says, when he says this, he's talking about potter and clay. What he's saying is if God makes people, God gets to decide what happens to the

people and we get offended with us. But let me say this, everybody believes in predestination, meaning that destiny is predetermined. The thing is, we just don't like God predestinating, we'd like to be the predestinating ones. So we were like, I don't want God to decide, I want to decide, we all believe in predestination, we just disagree as to whether or not God is the best one to make those decisions. It's like some of you, you got wayward kids that are proud of this. I don't like God choosing, I'd like to chose. You're not God. We need to trust him, for ourselves, and for others. You know, for me, this has great practical implication, it just comes to mind. We have five kids, we had a miscarriage in the middle. My kids came to me, they're like, dad, what happened to the baby? I said, you know what? God decides. Oh, the kids smiled, they're like, oh good. Why is it that God deciding is something that we struggle with as if we could do a better job making decisions? I don't know about you, all the problems in my life had this one variable, I was involved. All the rescuing in my life, that wasn't me, that was God showing up to save me from me. Why do I think that I could save me? I need God to save me from me. When he talks about the Potter and the clay here, I've got it in the notes. Sometimes it refers to individuals, sometimes to nations, there is a debate there, and the Old Testament uses it either way. The point is this, God can determine what he wants to do with people or entire groups of people, he's free, God's free. He then goes on to talk about Hosea 2:23, and 1:10. And what he says is, there were people that were now my people, I made them my people. Kind of shocked us. And he says people that I said I don't love them, then I said, you know what? I love them. What this shows is that if God chooses, you and I will be shocked at some of the people that get saved. Like us, how many of you were shocked that God saved, you're like, I'm not kindling, that's amazing. Let me tell you why this is loving, in love, God saves people from all nations that's what he's saying here with the Gentiles. Most religions one God only cares about one group of people, so every people group has their own God. Because God is creator of heaven and earth and ruler over all peoples, he saves people from all nations. The great vision in revelation is people from every language, tribe, tongue, nation, they're with Jesus because it's true, God loves the whole world, it's amazing. In addition, God can even save the unborn. The greatest 'cause of death last year, was not COVID but was abortion. And the most dangerous place to be was not church but a womb. And the question is, since we've had a holocaust on human life, what happens to all those children who are made in the image and likes of God? That they're knit together, wonderfully and fearfully made in their mother's womb, given a name and a destiny, as John the baptizer was even filled with the Holy Spirit, from his mother's womb and given a name, what happens to them? Some will say, well, they need to grow up, they need to hear about Jesus, and then they needed at the age of accountability to make a freewill decision. None of which is in the Bible, or unicorns or transmissions, none of it's in there. Or God chooses. What that means is, when Jesus says that the kingdom of God was made for little children, he may not have been using hyperbole but prophecy. If God can say, well, you know what? If they need to grow up and choose Jesus, they didn't get a chance. If God chooses well, okay, that actually makes me sleep better with our miscarriage. Number three, God can save those who have limited mental ability. If the answer is you need to understand everything and make a decision. Well, what if you can't? What if God could still choose you? There's gonna be some bad people, some unborn people, and some challenged people in heaven. not good people, loved people, chosen people. In love too, God can reach the unreached, people asked

us what about those that have never heard? Well, let me tell you this. You don't go to hell because you never heard, you go to hell because you sinned, okay? Don't start with everybody in heaven and then figure out why some didn't make it start with everybody in hell and wonder why some made it out. And my point is, how do we know who's heard and not heard? God could send an angel, he could send a dream. God could just pick somebody, God could do, like one of the benefits of being God, you do what you want, that's just like a total bonus. Right now in close Muslim countries, there are mass conversions of former worshipers of a demon god named Allah and they're having a dream they go to bed and they stand before a guy named Jesus at the judgment seat, and they convert to Christianity because of a dream that's going on right now across the Muslim world. So you know what? Let God choose. That's what I say. Let me say this. Do you get to pick who goes to your house? I get to pick who goes to my house. Why doesn't God get to pick who goes to his house? If it's the father's house, doesn't the father get to decide who comes in? That makes sense to me. I have some Armenians showed up at my house and we voted and we get to live with you, I'd be like, I'm reformed you don't. You don't, it's my house. Your vote don't count, one vote counts. You're predestined before the foundations of the world, not to live at my house. In addition, if God chooses, God can sometimes reach the worst people. Who's the guy riding this? Saul, Paul, religious terrorist. People who sin married to bin Laden, they would have called him Saul, that's that guy. He's a bad dude. He doesn't pick God, God picks him, he doesn't look for God, God looks for him. Let me just say this, you can disagree with me, I love you, you're wrong, you may have been predestined to be wrong, I don't know, so I don't wanna judge it. But even when I tell my testimony, I don't say I was looking for God and I found God when I chose God, I said, God was looking for me, and my God found me and my God saved me. You know what? If on the news, some guys pulled out of a burning building, I don't want him to be on the camera saying, let me tell you how I got myself out, I want to point the firefighter and say thanks. You're saved by God, you're saved from God, you're saved to God, you're saved for God. That's why Jonah says salvation is of the Lord, okay? And sometimes God could pick, people are like, I can't believe God picked that guy. I mean, I know that's exactly what your wife is thinking right now. How many of you, you've seen people get saved and you're like, did not see that coming, this is definitely by grace, they don't even have pants on and they met Jesus. She's in clear heels and so is he, and they got picked, that's crazy, right? The new people are not sure if they're allowed to laugh, they're not, when you see them, they're like. Exercise your free will, laugh all you want, okay? Because you know what? God is not obligated to save anyone, and it is an amazing thing that God would save anyone. And so he then quotes Isaiah and their thought was if God worked through the Jewish people to bring us Jesus as the savior, from the Jewish nation to the nations. If all the Jewish people didn't love Jesus, did God's word fail? He quotes Isaiah and there in Isaiah, and there in Isaiah he distinguishes between physical and spiritual Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham, the spiritual descendants, those who were born physically, those who were born again spiritually. How many of you, you know you were born into a Christian home, but you had to be born again as a Christian? This was my error as a young man, I was born into a church going home, my mom loved the Lord and was filled with the spirit, I didn't. So people ask, were you a Christian? Like I was born in a Christian home. But yeah, but were you born again in Christ? It's fine to be born into a Christian family, but you need to be born again into

God's family. The physical birth, it was a total blessing, but without the spiritual birth, there wouldn't be an eternal blessing. And what he's saying is there are people who are with God's people, but they're not spiritually one of God's people, and he calls it a remnant. Now here's the good news, God keeps a remnant, there's always believers somewhere. It doesn't matter how dark it gets, it's amazing you can find God's people. There's always a remnant left somewhere. And then lastly, he says, as Isaiah predicted, if God had not done his work, we would have been like Sodom and like Gomorrah. What he's saying is this, apart from God's mercy, apart from God's love, apart from God choosing to save some, we all would be destroyed. And he uses the analogy of Sodom and Gomorrah. So we'll talk about it, you got nothing else to do. Our culture now thinks that Sodom and Gomorrah was right and God was wrong. Billy Graham, it was attributed to him, it's debated whether it was he or his wife, but said, if God does not judge the United States of America, he owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology, okay. And this is from Genesis 19. It's the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, two neighboring towns. These two neighboring towns, they had a litany of sins and rebellion and it was a counterfeit just like Egypt, trying to make heaven on earth without God, and trying to have anarchy, replace order. In addition to their many sins, one of their prominent predominant sins, was sexual sin. These were not a people you see. And what happens in our day, even some Christians be like, well, it was very, very naughty, they had harems and polygamy. We do on our phones, we do on our computers, we do on our tablets, we collect harems, we just don't have the decency to actually date or marry those people. But we do collect our digital harems. So we're not in a moral high ground to judge the naughty people in the Old Testament, we found a way to take the naughtiness and make it global. So things get so bad in Sodom and Gomorrah. The rebellion is so bad and the sexual dysfunction is so bad. God sends down two angels, think of it like a covert mission, military operation. And it says in Hebrews that some have entertained angels unaware because when angels come on mission, though they are spiritual beings, they'll take on the appearance of physical form and they'll just blend in. In the same way, if you're a soldier on a covert operation, send into a foreign nation, you're gonna present yourself in such a way, they just kinda blend in, nobody knows it's you. So the angels come and they come on an investigation and they come as men. They show up in town, the men in town see that there's two new guys and they decide we need to have sex with them. Now all of the scholars, educated beyond their intelligence will interpret this differently. And all these alphabet soup, denominations, the LGBTQ, whatever it is this week, they will interpret this differently. But I'll just read to you what it says in Genesis 19:5, the guys in the city, see the two new guys show up, and they are like, these two guys we haven't slept with. They come, they surround Lot's house, he's the believer. He gets that name 'cause he's got a lot of problems, that's Lot. We might start Genesis in the fall. He's a problem but God chooses him by grace, not because of works. They surround his house, where are the two men? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them, that's what they said. What happens then is those who think that Sodom and Gomorrah were right and God is wrong. Let's say, oh, it wasn't about sex, it was an hospitality in the Eastern world, if you didn't welcome someone, it was a great offense, I would say this. If I knock on your door and you don't answer, and God sends road tar from heaven and destroys the whole city, it feels a bit like an overreaction. Right, true? What they're asking for is either sexual activity or sexual assault, co-operative or noncooperative. Lot the believer, the one believer

living in Sodom and Gomorrah. Question, should he be in Sodom and Gomorrah? No, no, this is like a homeschool family on the Vegas Strip. I just thought of that. It's exactly like that. There's not enough hand sanitizer to fix all this. So he's homeschooling his kids on the Vegas Strip between the two cabarets. The guys show up and they're like, hey, send the guys out, send the guys out. So here's what Lot does. He says no, no, no, I'll send my daughters. Anybody have daughters? Anybody just have a murderous thought? Same question. You guys want to assault somebody? How about my daughters? See if you look at this story like, will God pick the good people? No, there's only bad people. There's bad people who get grace and there's bad people who get justice, but just bad people. God doesn't want his daughters to go into harm's way. As a dad, I can't even believe this. I mean, I, I can't even, my whole life has been devoted to protecting my daughters from this kind of harm. What happens then is, God blinds the blind perverts, they're spiritually blind, he makes them physically blind, now they can't do anything, God gets involved, God spares. Lot and his family stay there. How many of you at this point be like, we're moving, we're moving see, some of you are from California, welcome. okay, welcome, welcome. Two things you need to know, we love you, you're not allowed to vote. Okay? Okay? That was pretty unanimous. So all the people with California plates now are gonna park down the street and walk, I'm not parking on that lot. Lot and his family are still there, they wake up the next day and God is like, I'm done, my mercy, my patience, my compassion is done, we're done with this. I am destroying everyone and everything in Sodom and Gomorrah, he's done. The day is coming for all the nations of the earth. The day is coming for all the citizens of the earth. And so ultimately what God does, he then takes Lot and his family and he ushers them out of town. God is like, you got to go, go now, go now, what does Lot's wife do? She looks back. Some of you, God has delivered you from the spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah and you keep looking back. Like, oh, I miss the drinking, I miss the sex, I miss the gambling, I miss the anger, I miss the rebellion, I miss the selfishness. No, you don't, don't look back, 'cause if you look back, ultimately your heart wants to go back. If God has delivered you, don't turn around, Jesus says, it's like a armor, when you put your hand to the plow, don't look back. Just keep plowing forward, whatever God would have for your future. Some of you need to delete some stuff from social media, some of you need to cancel some former relationships, some of you need to cancel some former commitments because for you, those are just ways of looking back. And if you've met Jesus, I tell you one of the best things you can do anymore is just delete some things on social media and say, you know what? I'm not gonna look at that 'cause that's back, I'm going forward. She looks back, she turns into a pillar of salt, salt, she's done, she's done. God then delivers them and we read this in Genesis 19:24, then the Lord rain down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the Lord out of the heavens. So the heavens open up literally flaming road tar by the ton comes flying from the presence of God and literally asphalts everyone and everything in Sodom and Gomorrah. And what he's saying is, that's what everyone deserves. And some of us like Lot and his family, we got delivered and it was a miracle. And two things we shouldn't do, we shouldn't look back, and number two, we shouldn't judge God, instead we should thank God that we got delivered because had we been buried in the flaming road tar, that would have been justice and that would have been fair. Instead, the justice went to the cross of Jesus so that we could get grace instead of justice and fairness. Let me close, while the bands comes up with two scriptures.

Jude 7 speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah. There's a big debate on Sodom and Gomorrah, there shouldn't be. Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. People today be like, no, no, no, it's not perversion, it's spectrum just 'cause Satan's at the source doesn't mean he's right, right? Well, no, no, no, no they're just choosing. No, no, no, God chose, God chose gender, God chose sexuality, God chose marriage, God chose. You're like, well, I'm gonna choose, what you're saying is God chose wrong and you're gonna make God repent, and you're gonna recreate yourself as your new creator and lord. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. Just like God going to Pharaoh 10 times, I'm telling you, or speaking to Pharaoh 10 times, I should say through Moses. Now there is a problem it's gonna get worse, time is short, I will forgive you, I am a forgiving God, I'll do this, but eventually it's just destruction. And it says this in 2 Peter 2:6-9, by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. And then he says this, I love this line. The Lord knows how to rescue. Let me tell you this, the world is coming to an end, the nations will be judged, the heavens will be opened, the ashes will be burning, the road tar will be flying, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will be coming. And here's the good news. If you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, you are rescued from sin, you are rescued from death, you are rescued from hell, you are rescued from the wrath of God, that you are loved and adopted and forgiven as a child of God, that this is as close to hell as you will ever be and God has an eternity that is awaiting you. And I'm telling you, we have something to look forward to, we have someone to look forward to, and right now what we're not gonna do, we're not gonna look back, we're not gonna go back, we're gonna look up until he comes down and God's children in the book of Exodus, they were set free for one reason, to worship God. And that's what we're gonna do right now.

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