

Romans 9:13 Finding God's Plan for Your Life

by Ernest O'Neill

God has a unique plan for each person, and we can find it by trusting in Him and using our abilities and interests to fulfill it.

Scripture: John 3:16

Topics: "Gods Plan", "Predestination"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into Romans 9:13, exploring the misconception of God's arbitrary choice in predestining individuals for heaven or hell. He emphasizes that God's love is extended to all who accept His Son, Jesus, into their lives, highlighting the importance of willingly allowing God to rule our lives. O'Neill clarifies that God's choice of Jacob over Esau was for a specific vocation, not salvation, and encourages listeners to trust in God's unique plan for their work lives. He warns against manipulating circumstances to secure significance, happiness, and security, urging reliance on God's guidance and enjoying the use of one's abilities for His purposes.

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

1. Will you look at the verse we're studying together today? Romans 9:13. So it seems plain from these words that Our Creator is just as fickle and arbitrary as the Greek and Islamic myths make Him out to be: He sees two little babies, Jacob and Esau, in their mother's womb, and in a fit of spite He determines He will love you and hate the other--so their final destiny for heaven or hell is predestined by God's arbitrary choice!

2. But it doesn't square with John 3:16, does it? The implication there is that God loves us all and will open heaven to any of us who take the gift of His Son seriously into our lives: in fact, Jesus everywhere describes His Father as One who says: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"; Jesus looked at Jerusalem and wept, saying, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen...but you would not!" So this verse that we're studying today cannot mean that God arbitrarily destines some people for heaven and others for hell regardless of their personal wills-- because everywhere else in the Bible, Our Creator reveals Himself as One who loves us all and will welcome any of us who are willing to let Him rule our lives.

3. What then does the verse mean? The clue is in the way the words "love" and "hate" are used in God's Word. Genesis 29:30-31: obviously Leah was not hated by Jacob, for he had several sons by her after this, but Rachel was regarded by Jacob as God's choice for him. Similarly in John 12:25, Jesus would be contradicting Himself if He meant we should "hate" our parents - He and His Father encouraged us to "honour" them - He was simply saying, God is to be loved first, our parents second. So "love" means God chose; "hate" means God rejected.

4. I'd just remind you also of what we have seen in the past weeks about God's choice of Jacob and His rejection of Esau: it was not a choice of Jacob for heaven and Esau for Hell; this was not at all the emphasis of this chapter so far-the whole emphasis is on God's choosing Israel as the nation in which His Son Jesus was to be born, and what God is saying in this verse is "I rejected Esau (though he was the elder brother) and chose Jacob as the third patriarch who would lead the Israelite nation. This was a choice for vocation NOT salvation. God chose Jacob, while he was still in his mother's womb for a certain job-He sent him into the world to fulfil a certain function in his life here on earth: the choice is NOT concerned with their personal destiny but their personal occupation here on earth.

5. This is actually the root meaning of one of the words that is translated "predestined" in the New Testament - "pro-oridzo" - before - horizon (marked out, set limits) - predesigned, and what we said last week was that just as God predesigned Jacob for a certain vocation so He has predesigned all of us to do a certain job in His world that only we can do - we are unique and God has a special plan for our work lives.

6. But how do we find it? Many eastern and western religions would answer - you can't avoid it - what fate ordains will take place whatever you do, but Jesus shows us plainly that we can frustrate God's plan for our lives by His own experience with Judas: obviously He did not choose Judas and pretend He was a good disciple all the time knowing he would betray Him. He chose Judas in good faith, but Judas turned away from God's plan for his life and threw it away. So can we! How then can we avoid frustrating God's plan for us? Let's look at Jacob's life and learn from it!

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Let's go into the delivery room with Rebekah, Jacob's mother: Genesis 25:21-23. So we know that God has already appointed a position for Jacob-He has already given him a job to do that will fulfil him-all Jacob has to do is relax in Faith that His Father-Creator will bring him into the satisfying vocation that He has designed him for. But look what happens at the birth: Genesis 25:24-26. Even as a baby, Jacob wanted to bring about a satisfying future for himself by his own power. But, you say, he didn't know of God's plan. All right, but presumably Rebekah told Jacob about the plan God had revealed to her for his life as soon as he could understand-and you remember Jacob's response: Genesis 27:18-19. He was determined by his scheming strategies and wily cleverness to ensure his position by his own manipulation. As soon as he realised that God's plan for him might be jeopardised by Isaac's finally blessing Esau, he felt it was essential to work whatever angles were necessary to bring about God's plan for his niche in the Hall of Fame. The result was disastrous: Genesis 27:41 - and Jacob took another step towards frustrating God's plan for his life.

2. The situation is exactly the same for you: God has your vocation planned for you - it is just right and will utterly fulfil all your abilities and aspiration, but it is vital that you rest in that assurance and leave your significance in this world in God's hands. Otherwise you can do what Jacob did - bring God's plan for you

to the edge of disaster. How do you find God's plan for your life? Trust Him that He has built into your personality certain interests and abilities which you ought simply to use and exercise. You are not aware of any particular interests and abilities? Then accept what you are doing at this present time and Ecclesiastes 9:10: 3:10-13.

3. Even when you apply for a new position, don't work angles, don't deceive in order to give a better impression of yourself than is true; God will bring about His plan for your life if you will simply be yourself and trust Him to give you significance, and refuse to try to get it from your vocation.

HAPPINESS

1. Let's go with Jacob as he runs away to escape his brother Esau's anger. You remember he came to Haran where his uncle Laban lived with his two daughters, Rachel and Leah. Jacob wanted to marry Rachel and served Laban seven years for her hand in marriage. At the end of that time Laban paid Jacob back with his own kind of treachery-he gave Leah instead. Whereupon Jacob had to serve another seven years for Rachel. Then in order to have some flocks of his own after 14 years of labour, he served a further six years for herds of cattle, so 20 years further on Jacob speaks to his uncle: Genesis 31:41-42. In other words, Jacob for 20 years got off God's plan for his life-working for people and things that he felt were essential to his happiness.

2. Ecclesiastes 2:18-25: Enjoy your work now. Don't use it as a means to obtain happiness later on--you may not live that long. Whatever your job is-pursue it with all your heart for the job of exercising your abilities, NOT because you think it will give you the people or the things that will bring you happiness. Accept it as God's best will for you at this present time and do it with all your heart.

SECURITY

1. All this time, Jacob did what we tend to do ourselves-use our abilities and interests to somehow manipulate for ourselves all the significance, happiness and security we possibly can in this world. That is exactly the way to miss God's plan for our lives: our abilities and interests are given to us to use with all our hearts while we trust God to give us all the significance, happiness and security He has planned for us. We cannot ever get more of these than He has planned and we will never need more than He has planned. All we can do is miss God's way for us by prostituting the abilities He has given us to lesser purposes than the greatest one of all-fulfilling His purpose in putting us here.

2. Jacob at last came to the point which we all have to reach, where he could not with all his manipulation ensure his own security. He was returning home with his wives and cattle and was terrified of meeting Esau, the brother who had threatened to kill him because of his deception of their father: Genesis 32:22-31. The man, of course, was an angel, and the strength that he destroyed in Jacob so that he had to limp for the rest of his life was his own natural strength, his clever deception and shrewd manipulation by which he tried to use his abilities to ensure his own significance, happiness and security. Every time he misused his abilities and interests in that way, he frustrated God's plan for his life.

CONCLUSION

1. Your abilities and interests and present job are God's gifts and guidance to you. Don't misuse them to ensure your significance, happiness and security. Trust God for those-and enjoy using your abilities to do what God gave them to the world to achieve.

2. God will then fulfil His plan for your life.

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