



## Parasha Korach

June 20, 2026

Torah: Numbers 16:1 – 18:32  
Haftarah: 1 Samuel 11:14 – 12:22  
Ketuvim Shlichim: Romans 13: 1 -10

### God's Elect

Shalom Mishpocha! In this week's Torah portion we read of a confrontational rebellion happening within the midst of Israel. Korah the son of Izhar, the Levite gives Moses a few choice words of his own when coming against him and Aaron with 250 men. Here, Korah angrily declares, *"You've gone too far! All the community is holy—all of them—and Adonai is with them! Then why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of Adonai?"* (**Numbers 16:3**) And it was this which caused Moses to fall on his face. And we know the rest of the story that after challenging the God given authority of Moses and Aaron, Korah and those who came with him were destroyed when they were swallowed up by the earth in a divine act from God letting all of Israel know Adonai chooses whom He will and when He does we are to honor it. But was Korah wrong in declaring that all of Israel is holy and set apart? No, for in Exodus 19, Adonai calls them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. A set apart nation whom Adonai also calls His chosen ones or His elect in Isaiah. They were chosen to bring Messiah into the world who would then reconcile it back to God. But what Korah got wrong was that without maintaining a covenant relationship with God and holding fast to His rules that it can cause one to be cut off from the covenant. And this became almost like a conundrum that the children of Israel would face time and time again throughout history. A problem that the emissary Shaul addresses in his day as he teaches the congregation at Rome about who constitutes as being the elect of God.

And in Romans 9 we see a thought process coming to life from Shaul. Here the apostle gives a lesson on God's sovereign choice when it comes to His elect here on the earth throughout all of history. In this chapter we see the rabbinical methods of teachings which include Remez, a technique where a rabbi would use part of a scripture passage to encourage a student to deduce the full meaning and which we see Yeshua often using when he taught. Another method we will see is Midrash. This was more of a conversational method of interpretation of study which brought about a nonlinear approach that challenges a simple answer. This method allowed for the rabbi to interpret scriptures in a new way which we will see Paul incorporate throughout this chapter as well. Then you have the SOD level or the deeper meaning approach of scripture. And last, the method of teaching in real world situations where the rabbi would use stories or physical examples to teach. Note that all of these methods are seen throughout not just Romans but much of Pauline epistles.

So here in Romans 9 Paul begins the chapter with an expressive show of great sorrow and agony when he says: *“I tell the truth in Messiah—I do not lie, my conscience assuring me in the Ruach ha-Kodesh—<sup>2</sup> that my sorrow is great and the anguish in my heart unending. <sup>3</sup> For I would pray that I myself were cursed, banished from Messiah for the sake of my people—my own flesh and blood, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites. To them belong the adoption<sup>[b]</sup> and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Torah and the Temple service and the promises. <sup>5</sup> To them belong the patriarchs—and from them, according to the flesh, the Messiah, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 9:1-5 TLV)*

Shaul is heartbroken over Israel’s rejection of Yeshua. Aching in his heart for his kinsmen and brothers according to the flesh. Even expressing that he’d rather see himself cut off in place of them. But then he goes on to let it be known that this rejection does not pertain to all of Israel but of those who are of unbelief. And in this unbelief and rejection there lies a divine purpose for it all. And in order to make this case the apostle begins with the story of Isaac and Ishmael and in Romans 9:6 it says: *“<sup>6</sup> But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all those who are descended from Israel are Israel, nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s seed; rather, “Your seed shall be called through Isaac.” <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God; rather, the children of the promise are counted as seed. <sup>9</sup> For the word of promise is this: “At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.” (Romans 9:6-9 TLV)*

Paul is letting it be known that this new walk is not about the flesh. It’s not about the promises given to physical Israel who were given the covenants, the priesthood, the kingship, the worship, the patriarchs, the Torah, etc. And though that was all good and they still remained, Paul lets it be known that being of the physical bloodline of the patriarchs does not guarantee one an automatic place in the world to come nor does it make one the children or a child of God. If that was true as Paul illustrates, then the promise seed would’ve gone through Ishmael and not Isaac which then would not have been of faith. But the promise is given through faith and even though Abraham doubted and wavered when he had a son through the young fertile Hagar, God in His sovereignty foreseen that the promise would come through Abraham’s faith when he believed that the sexual union between him and his barren wife would bring forth an offspring that would one day give rise to the Messiah. Here Paul reminds and exhorts the believers they can take solace in the fact that God does not count them as His children based upon physical lineage but in accordance to their faith.

Paul also reminds the reader that the promise is not only not about the flesh, but it also excludes the thought that the promise is about the birthright. For earlier he took us from Abraham to Isaac, and now uses Jacob to bring home another point on the matter in regard to God’s sovereign choice. In showing how His people are chosen through faith. As Romans 9:10 says: *<sup>10</sup> And not only this, but also Rebecca has twins, from one act with our father Isaac. <sup>11</sup> Yet before the sons were even born and had not done anything good or bad—so that God’s purpose and choice might stand not because of works but because of Him who calls— <sup>12</sup> it was*

said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.” <sup>[13]</sup> **13** As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” **(Romans 9:10-13 TLV)**

Now before continuing on there is something that must be addressed. For in these verses I just read especially in verse 11 dealing with “election” there have been a birthing of such beliefs such as Calvinism. Whose tenets hold that unconditional election is considered to be one aspect of predestination in which God chooses certain individuals to be saved whom they label the elect. Those elected receive God’s mercy, while those not elected i.e. the reprobates, receive justice without condition. Mainly because freewill is really obsolete and does not exist. Now you also have this with the Black Hebrew Israelites as well, who label the elect as only physical Israelites and all others are the reprobates predestined for judgement. Now how do they come up with this doctrinal belief? We see in verse 13, where Paul quotes Malachi 1:2 which speaks of loving Jacob yet hating Esau. And in particular the next few verses which speak of Pharaoh. But was Paul actually teaching the believers in Rome about a doctrine of unconditional election that limits a person’s freewill?

Let's take a deeper look at Malachi 1:2, which does say that God hated Esau but loved Jacob. That’s what it says, so is this an endorsement for the believers of unconditional election? I say no, because the word for hate here is the Hebrew word “sane”, or in Greek “miso”. **Sane** is defined as, to detest (on a comparative basis), to denounce, to love something or someone less than something else, to renounce one choice in favor of another. It also can mean to distance oneself, or not to prefer. As here, Adonai preferred Jacob over Esau because Esau despised his birthright. We also see this word “sane” being used with Jacob when it says, Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and that God saw that Leah was unloved (**sane**). It doesn’t mean that Jacob hated Leah but that he loved Rachel more because she is the one he preferred. Lastly, “sane” can be like a picture of a thorn. And if one is pricked by a thorn they will begin to feel pain which will result in them withdrawing from that which caused the pain which is the thorn itself. So what Malachi is illustrating through Hebrew parallelism is that the way of Esau became like a painful thorn which caused Adonai to withdraw Himself and in consequence favor the way of Jacob over that of his brother Esau.

Better yet there are Hebrew words that are more suitable to correspond to our modern understanding of hate such as “bazah” (**despise**), “ma’as” (**to loathe**), and “to’evah” (**abominable**). Not Sane. And here I think that Paul expected his audience to know this truth as he does little to expound upon it before continuing on to verse 14 which says: **14** *What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!* **15** *For to Moses He says, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”* **16** *So then it does not depend on the one who wills or the one who strives, but on God who shows mercy.* **17** *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up—to demonstrate My power in you, so My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”* <sup>[14]</sup> **18** *So then He has mercy on whom He wills, and He hardens whom He wills.* **19** *You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”* **20** *But who in the world are you, O man, who talks back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it,*

*“Why did you make me like this?”* ¶ <sup>21</sup> *Does the potter have no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honor and another for common use?* <sup>22</sup> *Now what if God, willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath designed for destruction?* <sup>23</sup> *And what if He did so to make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory?* <sup>24</sup> *Even us He called—not only from the Jewish people, but also from the Gentiles* (**Romans 9:14-24 TLV**)

So again let me be clear when I say that the misinterpretations of these verses have given rise to false doctrines and beliefs. And by concentrating on phrases such as: **“For this purpose I have raised you up”**, **“He has mercy on whomever He wills”**, **“He hardens whomever He wills”**, **“Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction”**, and **“Vessels of mercy which he has prepared beforehand for glory”**, have become the cornerstone to tenets of predestination without free will due to bad hermeneutics. But was Pharaoh, king of all of Egypt literally put on earth at a specific time predestined for destruction against his own will. What does the Torah really say about this? And what is Paul actually alluding to? As we look at Romans 9:17 once more that says: <sup>17</sup> *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up—to demonstrate My power in you, so My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”* (**Romans 9:17 TLV**)

As Paul takes us back to Exodus 9, we see the Torah is clear when it says in verse 12 that God had hardened the heart of Pharaoh. So now the question begs, did Pharaoh really have free will? I say Yes he did at first because the Torah is explicit when showing that before this occurrence it was Pharaoh himself that hardened his own heart then afterwards Adonai just reinforced the choice that Pharaoh had already made by encouraging the hardening of an already hardened heart. But in other places we see the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart without divine intervention like in Exodus 7:13, 8:15, 8:21 (which doesn’t say specifically that Pharaoh hardened his heart, but when we read the context of what happened from Exodus 8:20-24 we can clearly see that Pharaoh refused the offer given by God. For God tells Moses to go up to Pharaoh and tell him to let His people go and if he refuses then He will send swarms. Then later we see the swarms were unleashed on Egypt which lets us know that he refused and once again hardened his own heart to Adonai’s command. And again, we see it in Exodus 8:32. So yes, God did harden Pharaoh's heart as He promised in Exodus 7:3 saying, *“Yet I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt* (**Exodus 7:3 TLV**). Why? Because in his omniscience He already knew that Pharaoh would harden his own heart first and would never let Israel go as free men on his own volition so in hardening Pharaoh's heart thereafter he allowed him to become a vessel of wrath who eventually succumbed to his own delusions. We see this in Isaiah 66:4, where Adonai allows for those who delight in sin and false worship to succumb to their own delusions: *“I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not”*. (**Isaiah 66:4 NKJV**)

Here a word is given to those who have hardened their hearts that it will become even more hardened by divine intervention in order that they might be destroyed. And another place where Shaul speaks of God sending delusions is in the book of Second Thessalonians when he says: <sup>11</sup> *For this reason God sends them a delusional force, to lead them to believe what is false,* <sup>12</sup> *so that they may be judged—all those who did not believe the truth but delighted in wickedness.* **(2 Thess 2:11-12 TLV)**

So we see that what happened to Pharaoh is not this exclusive mishap or event. But that this hardening of heart can happen even to God's people if you also choose to walk in rebellion and harden your heart, then you too will be sent a delusion like the Pharaoh that may also cause for you to become a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction. But the difference with Pharaoh is that his rebellion was used to show forth God's glory on a world stage. But it doesn't mean that he himself was predestined for destruction even though in God's omniscience He knew beforehand that Pharaoh would choose sin. Paul knew it when he concluded in verse 18: *“So then He has mercy on whom He wills, and He hardens whom He wills.*

But now ask yourself, in that event who did Adonai have mercy on? Wouldn't it be the people of Egypt and all its many citizens? Let's again go back to Exodus 9 and look at what it says in verse 15 where Adonai says to the Pharaoh: <sup>15</sup> *Surely by now I could have stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.* <sup>16</sup> *However, I have let you stand for this reason: to show you My power, and that My Name might be proclaimed throughout all the earth.* <sup>17</sup> *Yet still you exalt yourself over My people, by not letting them go.* **(Exodus 9:15-17)**

So while God was chastising Pharaoh, at the same time He was showing His mercy to the Egyptians in not cutting them off entirely from the earth as a nation. Through this act of mercy we see that many Egyptians came out with Israel according to Exodus 12:38. We see in Deuteronomy 23 verses 7 and 8, that the third generation of the Egyptians could enter into the assembly of the Lord. We also see an Egyptian slave in 1 Chronicles 2 by the name of Jarha, written in the Judahite lineage of Sheshan when he married his daughter. Last but not most important, when you turn to Isaiah 19:18 and I've shared this with you before but it's worth recounting, you will see there will be a time when cities in Egypt will begin speaking the language of Canaan which is Hebrew. And in all honesty this is already being fulfilled in our day and time. As I said some time back it is in Egypt where 9 of their 23 state run universities have Hebrew Language Departments and that every year the toll of Egyptian students enrolling in Hebrew courses has gone from 2000 to now over 6000 students per year. And even in the Egyptian military academies, they offer Hebrew language courses while their recruiters look for military graduates who have studied Hebrew. What you also read in Isaiah 19, in regards to the Egyptians is that Isaiah prophecies that in the last days there will be an altar built to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt when Isaiah 19:24 declares that, *“In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come to Egypt, and the Egyptians to Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.* <sup>24</sup>

*In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the earth.* <sup>25</sup> *For Adonai-Tzva'ot has blessed, saying: “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance.”* **(Isaiah 19:24-25 TLV)**

So you see, Egypt will be a blessed people of God because as Shaul wrote, Adonai will show mercy on whom He will. Thus far, Paul has given us reason to understand that the elect of God are not chosen based upon the flesh, or their racial or ethnic identity. They are not chosen because of a birthright. And even though natural Israel who were the first to receive the promises does not have a guarantee when it comes to the elect, apart from faith. And in this truth Paul argues that to some this may seem unfair and unrighteous but let us not forget the story of the Exodus and the overthrow of Pharaoh, that God is still just in it all. More importantly who are we as the clay to throw unfair accusations at the Potter in what He deems as right. Because in this action of disposing of what Paul labels as the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, the riches of His glory is now made known. It is made manifest on the vessels of mercy. Both you and I, Jew and Gentile alike.

And with that Shaul now feels his position has been made clear and so he ends the section off with a message for the Gentiles, for Believing Israel, and lastly, for non-Believing Israel. For the Gentiles he uses a rabbinic method of interpretation in which he sees a section of scriptures that was given either for a time, a place, or a people, and repurposes the text in order to bring home a point. For he quotes Hosea 2 which was speaking of the Northern Kingdom of Israel but in it Paul sees that it also has relevance for the Gentiles of his day. Those Gentiles in Rome who would be listening as this letter was being read, they would have received the message as if it pertained to them. In it they should've rejoiced as they heard the prophet Hosea which declared: *“I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people,’ and her who was not loved, ‘Beloved.’* <sup>26</sup>*And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there they shall be called sons of the living God.”* **(Romans 9:25-26 TLV)**

Then the apostle shifts and gives this message to believing Israel when he quotes a passage of Isaiah 10 which says: <sup>27</sup> *Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of B'nei-Israel be as the sand of the sea, only the remnant shall be saved.* <sup>28</sup> *For Adonai will carry out His word upon the earth, bringing it to an end and finishing quickly.* <sup>29</sup> *And just as Isaiah foretold, “Unless Adonai-Tzva'ot had left us seed, we would have become like Sodom and resembled Gomorrah.* **(Romans 9:27-29 TLV)**

And looking at how Shaul proceeds to exhort believing Israel with these verses it appears as if he feels the need to encourage some who might just be discouraged by the fact that so many of their brethren were rejecting God's salvation that was sent through the risen Messiah Yeshua. And even with this salvation spreading throughout the known world, in the Jewish world it may have seemed that only a small few felt persuaded to believe. And through this prophecy Shaul let the Jewish believers know that as they may seem so small and insignificant, especially with the influx of Gentile believers that they will do good to remember as was it in Isaiah's day and time. And that throughout Israel's history where they were

supposed to be “the called out ones” and the remnant within the world there was always only a small remnant even within itself that truly obeyed God.

And with this he concludes with a dire warning for unbelieving Israel writing: <sup>30</sup> *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness—that is, a righteousness of faith. <sup>31</sup> But Israel, who pursued a Torah of righteousness, did not reach the Torah. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were from works. They stumbled over the stone of stumbling, <sup>33</sup> just as it is written, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and whoever believes in Him shall not be put to shame.”*  
**(Romans 9:30-32 TLV)**

Shaul was clear in his view on the Sovereign Choice of God which Korah later found out harshly that God’s elect is not solely based upon unconditional election but given and received by those who put their faith and trust in Him. Who would later become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to many as Yeshua the Messiah. The promised seed of Abraham. The one whom Paul says, “*but we preach Christ and Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles.* Shabbat Shalom!