

# The Chosen Unchosen (Seeing the One That Sees You)

Genesis 15:1-5, 16, 21:8-21

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*Video and audio versions available online:*

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*This document was prepared by Brett Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Brett know. Thank you!*

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## Message

When I was born, my father was 42 and had only been married for one year. Because of World War 2, seminary, and ministry, he had spent most of his life single and had been wondering if he'd ever have children. I was his first child and only boy. I was so wanted that it later became embarrassing. I grew up with stories of how he'd carry me around and say to everyone at church, I'm just going to eat this boy up and then he'd pretend to chew on me and blow bubbles on my stomach as I giggled with Glee. I was so very chosen. And yet, I really wasn't aware that I was chosen for I didn't know what that means.

I began to find out in 1966, when my parents sent me to kindergarten. The 1960's were a terrifying time to be a kid; I think everyone was mesmerized by American power and the survival of the fittest. And so, in gym class, we always picked teams. I can feel it in my bones. The PE teacher would pick captains like Benny Gutierrez or George Warfield and then they would pick players from the group of little boys standing in the dust hoping to be chosen, hoping to become "men." I was always chosen close to last. And sometimes the captains and those already chosen would complain, saying "We don't want Hiatt." I was always chosen close to last because I usually struck out.

Just a few years ago Dr. Marisa Kruger gave me an eye exam, and then asked me, "Hey did you used to have trouble hitting baseballs?" And immediately, I wanted to hide, but I said, "Well yeah, I guess so." She said, "I thought so. You have always had issues with depth perception." And immediately I thought, "You mean I don't have to hate myself?" When you struck out in elementary school, at least in the 1960's, everyone on your team would yell at you as if it were your fault because you just weren't trying hard enough, as if you didn't care about hitting the ball. But more than anything I wanted to hit the ball, but the harder I tried, the more I struck out. I said that I was picked close to last, because usually Duncan, or Matt, were picked dead last—And, ironically, I loved that they were picked dead last, for then I wasn't picked dead last. So, in fear for myself, I delighted in their un-chosen-ness, their failure. I also delighted in Benny and George's failure on math tests and in spelling bees—And, in my heart, I would blame them for I

figured they didn't try hard enough at math, that they didn't want to do well at math or spelling. But what little kid doesn't want to do well at math, spelling, or hitting baseballs?<sup>i</sup>

Well from gym class, and the kids on the bus who liked to pick on me, I learned that I was often the un-chosen. But when I got home, if I could just get to my father's lap, I could rest in this place where I knew that I was relentlessly chosen and that I could do nothing to be unchosen, on my father's lap I was home. I was aware that I was chosen and didn't know why I was chosen.<sup>ii</sup> I couldn't see what it was that dad saw in me, and now I know that what it was the "I" that wondered what it was that he saw in me. That's what he saw in "me;" the thing that "I" could not see. You discover this when you become a father or a mother... or even a babysitter.

The thing that's so priceless in every little child is the thing that they can't choose or un-choose, but that wonders if it's chosen. James 4:5, "[God] yearns jealously over the spirit (*pneuma*: the breath) that he has made to dwell in us." In the beginning God breathed his own breath, his spirit into you, and he yearns to commune with that spirit, his own spirit in you, but right now it's hiding in fig leaves, report cards, and baseball stats. It's hiding in the judgments of men, and you are one of those men.

About fifteen years ago, I got to know a man who had been attending our church. His name was Rich and at lunch he told me his story. In 1968, when he was six years old, he lived in the Cabrini Greens Housing Project in Chicago. He was one of ten children from six different men; he didn't know his father. Almost everyone in the projects was black, and Rich thought he was black until the riots broke out and he realized that he was the wrong color.

One night when the violence grew particularly bad, policemen came and removed Rich and his family. They placed them in a makeshift shelter in a nearby Catholic Church. "There were many children in the room in which I slept," said Rich. "But that night a catholic priest entered the room and chose me." He took Rich to a private place and molested him. He told Rich that he had been chosen because God didn't love him. For the next 34 years Rich's life was cloaked in loneliness, addiction, broken relationships, and shame. And the Priest? "He went on to become a cardinal," said Rich. I've known many others like Rich, that is many who think they were chosen to be unchosen by God. Whether that's true or not, you have to wonder why God would even allow people to experience such things, let alone think such things at all? In the Catholic tradition, a priest is called "Father," for he is to represent our Father in heaven. And so Rich was terrified of being seen by God the Father; and yet, every little kid longs to be chosen, because they are seen, truly, by their dad.

In his book, *No Exit*, Jean Paul Sartre pictures hell as a room full of people with no eyelids; for Sartre hell is being seen. I can see and be seen, argued Sartre. But God cannot be seen; he can only see. Therefore, if God exists, I am reduced to a mere object of his gaze. Consequently, to be truly human, there must be no unseen seer, no God. Apparently for Sartre, Hell is being seen by God. And yet, to not be seen at all is to cease to exist. There is a tribe in South Africa whose traditional greeting goes something like this: "I see you; I am here." They believe that you don't exist unless someone sees you.

Amazingly, that's also the implication of Quantum Mechanics. According to Heisenberg's Uncertainty principle, matter itself is fundamentally uncertain until its quantum state is collapsed through observation—that is being seen. And yet if Scripture is right, you matter even more than matter, for into your dust, that is your matter, the unseen seer has placed his own spirit. Well, my point is that we're terrified to be seen, and yet, if no one sees us we don't exist, or at least we go insane.

- Like the invisible man in H. G. Well's novel
- Like Kevin Bacon in the movie Hollow Man
- Like Golem with his Ring of Power in The Lord of the Rings
- Like Adam and Eve

Remember how they listened to a lie, took the fruit longing to know, and then hid from the Way, Truth, and Life, trapped in death, insanity, and confusion? Like them we don't want to be seen, and yet we long to be seen and chosen. Being seen can be hell. But it can also be heaven. When my kids were little, they would constantly say "See me, Daddy, See me. See me," as if, literally, nothing mattered until I saw it, saw them. In my experience, the greatest ecstasy is to be fully seen and then chosen by your covenant partner for the most intimate communion; it is to be naked and then clothed with love.<sup>iii</sup>

Perhaps the difference between Heaven and Hell is the character of the one who sees, or better yet, faith in the character of the one who sees. And so, in my way of thinking, nothing matters more than how God sees those like us, who often feel "unchosen." Do any of you ever feel unchosen?

For fifteen hundred years, most of the institutional church has argued that, whether the unchosen are unchosen because of a choice they've made, or unchosen before they could even make a choice—whatever the case, the unchosen are chosen by God for endless conscious torment in "hell." It's an idea that I find impossible to believe when I believe all of Scripture—Scripture just does not allow for endless conscious torment. And yet, no one can deny that our All-powerful All-knowing Creator does arrange for people like me and you and Rich and basically everyone in the Bible, to at least feel "unchosen" for a time.

In Genesis 12, for no apparent reason, God just chooses a guy named Abram and, strangely enough, his Seed. We preached about this extensively as we preached our way through Romans.

## The Unchosen:

\*Eliezer

\*Hagar

\*Ishmael

But in the process of choosing Abraham's Seed, there are others who realize that they're not chosen, namely: Eliezer, Hagar, and Ishmael. How does God feel about them, the unchosen?

### Genesis 15:1-4:

**After these things** [after Abram and Sarai go to Egypt, many years after God said to Abram, "I will bless you... so that you will be a blessing"] **the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."** <sup>2</sup> **But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"** <sup>3</sup> **And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring [*zera*: Seed], and a member [a slave] of my household will be my heir."** <sup>4</sup> **And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir."**

So, Eliezer, loses all that belongs to Abraham, because God informs Abraham that his Seed will inherit all that belongs to Abraham which, ironically, includes Eliezer, it would seem? Well, Eliezer is an unchosen Syrian slave. And for some reason we've been trained to think that guys like Eliezer—who never prayed to God in the name of Jesus before they died, guys who never chose to be chosen—guys like that . . . will never ever go to heaven. Instead, guys like Eliezer will be endlessly tortured in a place called "hell," where they'll cry out for water to quench their thirst and save them from the flame, and none will be given, for they are endlessly separated from heaven by a chasm that none can cross. And yet there's nothing in this text that even implies such a thing, is there? People say that they can find this in the New Testament, but I cannot. Nonetheless, Eliezer is not chosen, and that must have been a terrible disappointment to Eliezer. Have you ever been disappointed with God?

### Genesis 16:1-2:

**Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant [*shiphchah*: slave girl] whose name was Hagar.** <sup>2</sup> **And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go**

**in to my [slave girl]; it may be that I shall obtain children<sup>iv</sup> by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.**

Sarai is choosing to be chosen, isn't she?<sup>v</sup> If you think that you can choose to be chosen, aren't you choosing to believe that you are not the chosen, but the chooser?

**Genesis 16:3-6:**

**So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant [slave], and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. <sup>4</sup> And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt [*qalal*: to dishonor] on her mistress. <sup>5</sup> And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant [slave] to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt [dishonor]. May the LORD judge between you and me!” <sup>6</sup> But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant [slave] is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with [*anah*: afflicted] her—probably whipped her, leaving stripes on her back—and she [Hagar] fled from her.**

Can you imagine how Hagar feels? All her life she'd been an object. She's a slave girl; her skin is the wrong color, she's the wrong race. She may have never been loved in her life, and now perhaps the only people that ever did love her (her mistress and her master) have rejected her. And she's not just rejected by them, I bet she feels forsaken by God. For 10 years, she'd heard of the Promised Child, the Chosen One. She had hoped but now her child was chosen to be the unchosen, and maybe cursed. God had told Abram: “The one who dishonors you, I will curse.” Hagar had “dishonored” Sarai (v.4), and Sarai and Abram were one. Hagar must have felt cursed and intensely ashamed.<sup>vi</sup> Her very existence was fundamentally uncertain; She wanted to hide. She felt like Rich.

**Genesis 16:7-13a:**

**The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. <sup>8</sup> And he said, “Hagar, servant [slave-girl] of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” She said, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.” <sup>9</sup> The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to [literally: ‘be under affliction by’] her.” <sup>10</sup> The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring [seed] so that they [he] cannot be numbered for multitude.” <sup>11</sup> And the angel of the Lord said to her, “Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. (This should sound familiar to you.) You shall call his name Ishmael (It means “God hears”), because the Lord has listened to your affliction. <sup>12</sup> He shall be a wild donkey [KJV: wild ass] of a man, [that's not necessarily bad; it could mean something like “Italian Stallion.”] his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.” <sup>13</sup> So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” [In Hebrew: *El-Roi*].**

Are you getting this? Hagar is not consigned to endless conscious torment in Hell. Instead, she receives a promise vaguely reminiscent of that given to Mary. And it appears that she has faith in God, which according to Paul in Galatians 4 means that she's a child of the Promise—even though it's Sarai that's pregnant with the Promise.<sup>vii</sup> Sarai can't see the Promise, but maybe Hagar can. And then, to top it off, she names Yahweh—how crazy is that? She's got a pet name for Yahweh. She calls him Elroy, and he doesn't smite her; he seems to really like it!

**Genesis 16:13:**

**So she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, Elroy, for she said, “Truly here I have seen [ra'ah] him who looks [ra'ah] after me.”**

That's a challenging sentence to translate and it appears to mean many things all at once so the NRSV translates her words as, “Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?” The NKJV translates her words as, “Have I also here seen him who sees me?” Whatever the translation, it appears that there was something about that place, in which she felt so dishonored and unchosen, something about the place that allowed her to see that she was chosen to see the one who sees her. And she must've realized that when she saw the One who sees her, if she, in fact, died, she also lived. For as we know: no one can see the face of Yahweh and live. So, what do you suppose she saw? We know that she saw God, who looked like a man, and was a messenger. In all of Scripture she's the very first of whom it is explicitly stated that she sees him—and recognizes him: her helper, her husband, Elroy, who sees her stripped of all her fig leaves and yet, delights in her. Adam couldn't find his helper, his *ezer*, but Hagar can.

In Genesis 12, it's said that “Yahweh appeared to Abram.” And in Genesis 15 Abram has a vision of the Word. But here in Genesis 16 “Hagar sees the one who sees her.” Do you remember to whom it was that Jesus first chose to reveal his identity in the Gospel of John? It was to a Samaritan woman (an unchosen woman—unchosen 6 times by 6 men) sitting by a well. Hagar is not chosen to be named as the great, great grandmother of Jesus, but she is chosen to see Jesus and when she sees Jesus, I bet she sees her stripes on his back; she sees her shame imprinted on his body. Hagar was unchosen, in order to be chosen to see that she was saved by Yehoshua—“Yahweh is Salvation.”

**Genesis 16:13-16:**

**So she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, Elroy, for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who [sees me and sees after] me.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; [which means: “the well of the living one who sees me”] it lies between Kadesh and Bered.<sup>15</sup> And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.<sup>16</sup> Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.**

So, Abram receives Ishmael back as his first born and only son, and for 13 years appears to think that Ishmael is the promised Seed, by whom all the families of the earth will be blessed. We know this, for in the next chapter, God appears to Abram (whom he now calls Abraham) and tells him that Sarai (whom he now calls Sarah) shall give birth to a son. And 99-year-old Abraham starts laughing and says, “What about Ishmael? Oh, that Ishmael would live before you.” God then has Abraham circumcise himself, Ishmael, and his whole household, which

includes Eliezer. And circumcision does not mean, “Now God will endlessly torture you,” but “I know that hurt, but now you belong to the family of God.” When Ishmael is fourteen, having grown up as the first born and only son of Abraham, Isaac is born; And Isaac means “he laughs.”

**Genesis 21:8-10:**

**And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac [Yitschaq: He Laughs] was weaned. <sup>9</sup> But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing [from *tsachaq*: to laugh]. <sup>10</sup> So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac [Yitschaq].”<sup>viii</sup>**

Now, in Galatians, 4 Paul writes that there is a fascinating spiritual “allegory” here between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant, the Jerusalem above represented by Sarah, and the Jerusalem on earth represented by Hagar. But the Allegory doesn’t apply to some people as opposed to other people, but to each person with a New Self and an Old Self. And here, it’s abundantly clear that Sarah still has an old self. She sees fourteen-year-old Ishmael laughing and resents his laughter for she is the mother of laughter. “He can’t be blessed if my son is blessed,” thinks Sarah. And yet her son is blessed to be blessed to all the families of the earth.

The family of Isaac is now known as “the Jews,” and the family of Ishmael is now known as “the Arabs.” And so it appears that all of us are still an awful lot like Sarah, for we think “How the hell could both of them be blessed? They’d have to share.” Well, fourteen years earlier, Sarah chose to be chosen, which revealed that she wasn’t chosen, which is the lie. Now, Sarah thinks she is chosen because another is not chosen, which means that she has chosen to be alone, which is hell. But don’t panic, Sarah will give birth to Salvation, even though she still hasn’t seen him herself.<sup>ix</sup> There’s a lot to think about there, Mother Church.

**Genesis 21:10-13:**

**Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” <sup>11</sup> And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. <sup>12</sup> But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman.<sup>x</sup> Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring [Seed] be named. <sup>13</sup> And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring [seed].”**

Get that? Both boys are Abraham’s seed. Both boys will be blessed, in fact Ishmael will father twelve princes (which should sound familiar)<sup>xi</sup>. Both boys will be blessed, but the Seed by whom all the nations of the world will be blessed, will “be named” through Isaac. “Salvation is from the Jews,” said Jesus, the king of the Jews, to the outcast Samaritan woman at the well who saw him and recognized him first.

**Genesis 21:14-17:**

**So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child [*yeled*: boy], and**

sent her away. Imagine how that felt to Ishmael. He must have been crying “My father, my father, why have you forsaken me?” And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. <sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child [boy] under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, “Let me not look on the death of the child [boy].” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. <sup>17</sup> And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God [not “an angel,” but “the angel,” the God/man] called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard [*shamah*: listen] the voice of the boy where he is.

You see, there’s something about where he is, that is related to how God hears him, God hears everything, but he doesn’t respond to everything. But God does respond to Ishmael in this place where he feels forsaken, unchosen, stripped of all his fig leaves, and good as dead. And what do you suppose Ishmael had said, which God has heard? Perhaps, “Yahweh, save me—Ya-shua,” or even “God, help—El-ezer” So anyway, Hagar was unchosen, because she had always been chosen to see her helper, her husband, the Messenger of Yahweh, the God/man, Jesus. And apparently, Ishmael was unchosen, for he had always been chosen to be heard by Yahweh, his Father.

**Genesis 21:18-19a:**

**Up! [*quwm*: arise]<sup>xii</sup> Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” <sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.**

In the wilderness, there is a deep well—actually a spring—of living water. Few people can see it now, for only the afflicted and unchosen are chosen to drink from it; you must lose your life to find it.

**Genesis 21:19b-21:**

**And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. <sup>20</sup> And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. <sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.**

The last we read of Ishmael, he is with his brother Isaac, and together they are burying their father, Abraham. Just like the last we hear of the Man Esau, he is with his brother Jacob, and together they are burying their father Isaac. Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, they must have called their father, “Our Father.” Rich told me that the day after he was molested by the Catholic Priest who told him that our father in heaven didn’t love him, he and his siblings were moved to another shelter. He told me that he so clearly remembers lying in the dark that following night weeping and trying so hard not to weep. He was utterly terrified to be heard, or seen, for he believed it was all his fault, and yet he so longed to be seen, heard, and chosen by someone good. He lay alone in the dark, six years old, fighting back a river of tears. “There in that place,” said Rich, “where I was, I heard a voice. It was so clear that I got up and looked in the other room to see who was talking. The Voice said, ‘Richard, it wasn’t your fault.’” “Peter, I must have heard



that voice and those words a hundred times more after that. For years, I wondered, but didn't know, who was speaking."

Thirty-four years later an Anglican Priest in Evergreen told Rich who it was that was speaking, and Rich began to see Jesus. Shortly after that Rich started attending our church, and it was a thrill for me to tell him, "Rich, my Dad is your Dad, and your Dad is my Dad." I've become fascinated with how the unchosen turn out to have always been chosen—chosen to not only be saved but chosen to see the savior in his greatest glory and chosen to hear the most beautiful words from our Father. For years I prayed with a friend who had been ritually wed to Satan by her own father, and yet our Father in Heaven repeatedly showed her in visions that she was wed to his own Son and our Lord Jesus. I prayed with another friend who had been ritually entombed by her own father, but saw that Jesus had always been with her, and together they rose, as she heard him say, "Little sister, My Daddy is your Daddy, and your Daddy is my Daddy." I've been amazed at how the unchosen are chosen, and then utterly sobered at how the chosen are unchosen, for a time. See, it wasn't only Ishmael that felt unchosen by Abraham and God.

### The Unchosen Chosen:

\*Eliezer

\*Hagar

\*Ishmael \*Isaac

Remember how God told Abraham to take Isaac to Mt. Moriah, which is also Mt. Zion and Mt. Calvary and there offer him as a burnt offering? Isaac would've been about fourteen years old. He must've wondered "My father, my father, why have you forsaken me?" And it wasn't only Hagar that felt unchosen, Sarah had also felt unchosen. And just as Hagar (the Egyptian) had been a slave to Abraham and Sarah. Sarah and her sons—the Israelites would be slaves in Egypt for four hundred years, in fact Joseph is sold into slavery by Ishmaelites. Israel was again chosen and led out of Egypt by Moses. But they would also be unchosen and led into captivity in Assyria and Babylon.

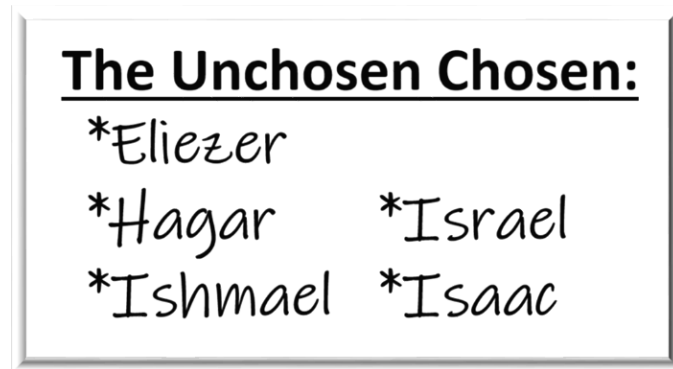
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The Mirisch Production Company (1971)

*A Jewish man speaking to God.*

Tevey (Topal): I know, I know we are the chosen people but once in a while, can't you choose someone else?

We always assume that, whenever Scripture refers to someone as "elect" or "chosen," they are chosen for eternal salvation or, maybe, endless conscious torment, but that's not the way Scripture uses those words.

Isaiah 14:1, “Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob and again choose Israel.” “Again, choose Israel,” because for a time Israel was unchosen, and exiled from home, just like I had been exiled from my Father’s lap when he and my mom sent me off to school, where I was unchosen by my fellow baseball players.<sup>xiii</sup>



Romans 9 through 11 was all about this: Remember the mystery of the Unchosen Chosen? And then, how Paul makes his point in Romans 11:32? “God has consigned all to disobedience.” And what is disobedience? It’s a lack of faith that you have been chosen by Grace. “God has consigned all to disobedience that he may have mercy on all.” And what is God’s mercy on all? “Salvation by Grace through faith and this not of ourselves.”<sup>xiv</sup> It’s the knowledge that you have always been chosen. So, in the very place that you were called “not my People,” there in that place “you will be called sons of the living God.”<sup>xv</sup> So, there is a place in which we must all experience rejection in space and time to come to know that we are elect, from, to, and for, all eternity. I did not know what it meant to be chosen, until I was unchosen in baseball and returned home to my father’s lap, where I knew that I was always chosen and never unchosen in him. And so, I freely chose to be who I always am: his beloved.

In Romans, and Isaiah, we learned that all of Israel, then all of Judah, is unchosen, except for one—the only begotten son of God. And so we, the unchosen, all reject him, by nailing him to a tree, and there he accepts all of us and gives to each of us his own body and blood. So, he not only “accepts” us. In him, God chooses us, for God chooses him in us. And that choice is the revelation of who we truly are. We are the Body of the Chosen One: The Beloved.

So, like I was saying, it’s not only Ishmael, it’s not only Hagar, and it’s not only Eliezer who are not Chosen. Jesus told a story about a Rich Man and poor man named Lazarus, who end up on the opposite side of a chasm that none can cross. Jesus was talking to the Jews and points out that the rich man had five brothers, and every Jew knew that Judah also had five brothers, and that their tribe was the Rich tribe, because they had been chosen, and from them would come the King of the Jews. The Rich man is being tormented in Hades, and so begs his father Abraham to send Lazarus with a drink, as if Lazarus were his servant or slave.

In Jesus day “Lazarus” was the common form of the ancient name “Eliezer,” which means “God is Helper,” and as you now know, Eliezer was Abraham’s Syrian slave who was unchosen so that others would be chosen. Eliezer, (that is “Lazarus”), is now in “Abraham’s bosom, (*kolpos*).”<sup>xvi</sup>

John 1:18 “No one has ever seen God, the only begotten in the bosom (*kolpos*, also translated “lap”) ... so, in the bosom, or on the lap, he has made him known.”<sup>xvii</sup> Eliezer is now in the bosom of Abraham. Eliezer not only inherits the Middle East; he inherits Abraham. And he’s utterly at home on his lap. Judah, however, is on the other side of the chasm because he wouldn’t help poor Lazarus who had been lying at this door. And why wouldn’t he help Lazarus? Well because he believed that he was chosen, and Lazarus, “the last and least of these,” was not chosen.

And now if you worried about Judah in Hades on the other side of the chasm, you must remember that Jesus is the King of the Judeans, the Jews. And he is the Promised Seed of Abraham that comes through the Jews, but is “blessed to be a blessing to all the families of the earth,” including Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and America, but especially Judah, that is, the Jews. No man can simply cross the chasm, but Jesus descends into Hell, transforms Hell into Heaven and levels every chasm. (Isaiah 40:4, Luke 3:5)

Now I know that this all sounds incredibly complex, but maybe it’s very simple. Pay attention: You, my dear, are chosen, and have always been chosen. Everything that’s anything, has been chosen by God with his Word who is his judgment; everything that’s anything is his creation. All things are chosen by God, who is Love, but not all things truly know that they are chosen, but you have been predestined to know. That knowledge is life and is eternal. But to truly know that you are chosen, perhaps you must experience being not chosen in space and time. If you truly know that you are chosen, if you have experienced being chosen, it means that at one time you were not chosen, or, at least, believed that you were not chosen. In the same way if you experience being saved, it means that at one time you were not saved or at least believed that you were not saved. (How could you be “saved,” if you were not at one time, “unsaved?”) In the same way if you know the Good and the Life, it may mean that at one time you experienced evil and thought you were dead. So, God breathes his breath into dust making Adam. (If you wonder, “What does God, the Father, see in me?” He sees himself.)

### *[Fall and Redemption]*

God breathes his breath into dust making Adam, and places Adam in a Garden, with a tree and an evil talking snake. Adam believes a lie, and so takes knowledge, in order to make choices in order to create himself, and so be chosen for his choices by his Creator, who has always chosen him. But, if one chooses to be chosen, it just reveals that that one is not the Chosen, but the Chooser, which of course is the lie that leaves a spirit utterly alone. So instead of making himself good, Adam makes the bad and begins to hide himself in the bad—fig leaves that he fashions into clothes and pretends are himself. He’s hiding his true self in a false self. It’s that false self, that must be unchosen for Adam to know that he’s always been chosen by the Chooser of all things. Adam must die to himself, to see the One who’s always seen him, for when he sees him, he will know that he’s not the Chooser, but the Chosen.

He will know that he’s always been the Chosen and yet, once he sees that he’s always been the Chosen, he can begin to freely choose the Chooser; he can begin to love Love and choose all things with Him. In other words: He can sit on his father’s lap and endlessly enjoy his home, which is heaven. You know this from experience: it’s the Chosen Unchosen that freely choose to

love their neighbor, and freely choose to Love their Lord—that freely choose to be who they actually are: The image and likeness of God. The Point of Election is not that some are chosen and others are not chosen, but that God is the Chooser, and you cannot choose the Good, until you know that you have been chosen by the Good, who is your God.<sup>xviii</sup>

So maybe, right now, you feel unchosen,

- Maybe you've applied over and over again, and you're never chosen.
- Maybe you just went through a divorce, or learned you had cancer, or are remembering some abuse that happened decades ago.
- Maybe you've always felt uncoordinated and always struck out.
- Maybe you've always felt dumb, and wondered "why didn't God choose me to be smart, or pretty, or popular, or funny?"
- Maybe you feel like whatever you do, it's just not enough.
- Maybe you feel unchosen.

I'm convinced that this place is a sacred place, for you have been chosen to see that you've always been chosen. You've been chosen to see the one that sees you.

## Communion

He takes bread and breaks it saying this is my body given to you.

He takes the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood drink of it all of you.

This is the Chosen One, broken and bleeding, and apparently unchosen.

## The Unchosen Chosen:

*Eliezer	*Jesus
*Hagar	*Israel
*Ishmael	*Isaac

Jesus is chosen to be un-chosen by all of us, and perhaps, at least for a moment in space and time, to believe along with us, that he is forsaken by God. But then, he is chosen to know that he has always been chosen, and even more than chosen; he is the eternal choice of God. He says, "take and eat; take and drink." It's God the Father who chooses. And it's God the Son who knows that he is the Chosen in you, so that you would know that you're chosen in him. So, how could you possibly be more chosen?

Close your eyes and pray with me:

Jesus thank you for the experience of being last and least, for now I see that you are last and least with me. Thank you for these times in which I have felt unchosen. For now, I see that we have always been chosen. I'm beginning to see the one who sees me—"Me," that is, who it is that I am and We are. Amen.

## Benediction

This week, may you see the One that sees you. But when you truly see him, you will come to a startling realization: You are not the Chooser, but the Chosen. And only then can you begin to choose the Good and the Life. This week, may you rest with Jesus in the bosom of the Father.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> And if it's a question of effort, where do the desire to "do" things come from? How do gain the desire, to actually desire, and not just do out of shame and fear of what might happen if you don't?

<sup>ii</sup> I couldn't see "it." And yet, now I know that the "it" I could not see, was the "I" that couldn't see the "it." "It" was the "I" that wondered if I was chosen and so desperately wanted to be chosen.

<sup>iii</sup> We attract lovers with fig leaves and clothing, in the hope that they might see us and choose us with no fig leaves or clothing.

<sup>iv</sup> literally, "*be built up*." Sarai want to use Hagar to build up her own house.

<sup>v</sup> This is such an immense theme in Scripture. The way God has arranged thigs, until recently, a woman couldn't just choose to ger pregnant (unlike a man that is capable of raping a woman). A woman must hope to be chosen. Sarai, it seems, hopes to basically rape Hagar, and take her baby.

<sup>vi</sup> Hagar was now pregnant with shame, failure, rejection, and rape.

To use the words of God through Hosea the Prophet, St. Paul in Romans, Hagar was pregnant with "not my people" and she was "not beloved."

<sup>vii</sup> Actually, Hagar is also pregnant with the Promise if she's pregnant with Faith Hope and Love—He won't be "named" through her, but Jesus is the "Son of Man." And by biblical reckoning Hagar is "man," who, along with all other men, give birth to the Messiah.

<sup>ix</sup> I hope you realize that we, mother church, are just like Sarah.

<sup>x</sup> Abraham obviously loves Hagar and Ishmael.

<sup>xi</sup> Genesis 17:20, 25:16

<sup>xii</sup> When Jesus spoke to Lazarus, dead in his tomb, if he spoke in Hebrew, this may be just what he said—"arise."

<sup>xiii</sup> **11** I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected (*apotheo*) his people whom he foreknew... <sup>7</sup> What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened... <sup>11</sup> So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. <sup>12</sup> Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

<sup>13</sup> Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry <sup>14</sup> in order somehow to make my [flesh] jealous, and thus save some of them. <sup>15</sup> For if their rejection (*apobole*) means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?... <sup>28</sup> As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup> For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup> so they too have

now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup> For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. – Romans 11:1-32

Zechariah 2:12 “The Lord will again choose Jerusalem.” “Again choose Jerusalem,” because she was unchosen for a time, just like Hagar, and just like Sarah... Unchosen, only to discover she has been chosen for all eternity.... the Jerusalem above in your mother.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ephesians 2:8

<sup>xv</sup> Romans 9:26

<sup>xvi</sup> Luke 16:22,23

<sup>xvii</sup> “*Kolpos*” clearly refers to that part on a man or woman between the breasts and above the breastbone, that spot on the exterior of a person that is closest to that person’s heart.

<sup>xviii</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “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.” <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. . . . <sup>32</sup> For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! <sup>34</sup> “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” <sup>35</sup> “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

–Romans 9:14-18, 11:32-36

The doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel because of all words that can be said or heard it is the best: that God elects man; that God is for man too the One who loves in freedom. It is grounded in the knowledge of Jesus Christ because He is both the electing God and elected man in One. It is part of the doctrine of God because originally God's election of man is a predestination not merely of man but of Himself. Its function is to bear basic testimony to eternal, free and unchanging grace as the beginning of all the ways and works of God... The doctrine of the divine election of grace is the sum of the Gospel. It is the content of the goodness which is Jesus Christ... It is not a mixed message of joy and terror, salvation and damnation... The Yes cannot be heard unless the No is also heard. But the No is said for the sake of the Yes and not for its own sake. In substance, therefore, the first and last word is Yes and not No. . . . [the doctrine of election must be understood quite definitely and unequivocally as Gospel; that it is not something neutral on the yonder side of Yes and No; that it is not No but Yes; that it is not Yes and No, but in its substance in the origin and scope of its utterance, it is altogether Yes.] The election of grace is the sum of the Gospel-we must put it as pointedly as that.

- Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics 11.2: The Doctrine of God*, p. 3, 10, 13