

That it is Abraham's spiritual descendants who are the true children of God, and not his physical descendants, is clearly revealed in Paul's Letter to the Romans. After expressing his heart grief for the unbelieving Jews, wishing that he himself were accursed if that would accomplish their salvation, he consoles himself with the following truths:

It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all Abraham's children are his true descendants; but "it is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.

(Romans 9:6-9)

To back this up, Paul then cites Isaac and his son Jacob as an example. Neither of these two Old Testament saints were the firstborn sons of their father, having any entitlement to the birth-right.

Paul also points out that before Jacob and his twin brother Esau were even born, or had done anything good or bad, God told Rebecca that the elder would serve the younger.

Does this mean that the Lord caused Esau to behave in the ungodly manner in which he did in order for His purpose of election to continue?

Some erroneously teach that He did. However, in the previous chapter of the same Letter, Paul explains that predestination is dependent on foreknowledge. The word simply refers to God knowing who would accept or reject His offer of salvation by grace through faith in advance of them actually doing it.

Therefore, it is error to say that Esau was not perfectly free in his choice and that he did what he did because God preordained it. The Lord knew Esau would act that way and so took his actions into His plan and made them a part of it.