

# *What About God's Chosen People?*

## *Part II*



By Philip E. Busby

**Question #21** - *“Is it true that the Jews are God's chosen people? I have a Christian friend who says the Jews were not God's chosen people.”*

I said at the end of our last segment that Jesus was delivered by the religious leaders of the day to be crucified by the secular authority of the day, not because the religious leaders believed Jesus was by no means of God or received His power from God, but mostly because Jesus was not The Messiah their religious beliefs had taught them He should be. I could add to that the fact it also had a lot to do with what they knew Jesus would mean to their own positions as leaders and their religious authority in making the rules as they saw fit. Even Pilot knew it was for envy that they had brought Jesus to him, asking for capital punishment to be carried out. (Matt. 27:17-18) However, I truly ended last time by making the statement - the church, which now calls itself the Christian church, is guilty of nothing less than this on so many points!

Now, I have no doubt that in saying this, I may and am sure I have upset many; but as I also said in our last segment, it is not my goal to judge any individual, only to teach what God tells me to. The simple point of the matter is that the Christian religion may never have

gotten the chance to kill The Messiah, but disposing of things we know very good and well are of God because they do not, in our minds, go along with, or facilitate, our thought patterns as to what is best in this world, especially for our “time,” is something people readily do! That brings us back to the point at hand, which is that we believe in an Old versus New Testament. In believing even the better theology that Christianity is in someway(s) rooted in the Old Testament, it is still the definition of the Christian religion that you believe Jesus changed something about the way people are saved. Thus, there is a belief there is a new religious way to serve God that did not exist until Jesus came. Along with this, many, of course, believe that makes the “church” the new authority, and it ultimately negates Israel as a chosen people, at least in many aspects.

Many Christians may simply get caught up in mistakenly using the words such as “rooted” and “founded” in the Old Testament, because we do not often have the room to teach the fundamentals that make up the truth. However, when we use these words, whether intentionally or unintentionally, we often still portray a belief that there is something new which grew or was built out of the Old that Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Daniel, and all those who were true believers before the coming of Christ did not have, and this is untrue at its core! We believe we live in a special dispensation of time because we only have to call upon a name to receive something or take advantage of someone who was unavailable to earlier people who walked this earth! The truth of the matter is, that in believing such things, we believe the same things that brought Jesus to the cross. We do not believe Jesus was/is truly God!

This is the key to what I said before about the salvation issue making our viewpoint clearer! The Christian religion teaches, and many believe, there is something new or different on this side of The Messiah's coming, pure and simple. If that point is not clear to you, please allow me to break it down as simple as possible. Quoting once again, not from the Old Testament but from the New, John makes it unequivocal in the opening verses of his Gospel, by point-blank telling us Jesus was/is God. He has not just been with us from the beginning of all things, but is responsible for our creation! If we do not believe that Jesus, our Creator, has always been involved in the process of this human existence and available to all people, then we are calling John a liar! We use lame excuses for explaining ourselves out of this by saying, “Well, all

we are really saying is that people did not know the name of Jesus before He came, or that Jesus had not yet died for our sins and that changed everything.” However, that is a very weak point to try and make, especially when it does not show up in what you teach. What both “Christians,” who practically throw the Old Testament away, along with those who believe Christianity is founded or rooted in the Old, believe is that the ceremonies, such as animal sacrifice and the law in general, which God gave to the children of Israel, could and would save a person, or at least preserve a person for salvation, if they followed it at the time before Jesus' sacrifice. The new belief is now that formula is old and will not work because we have a new one! This is true even of those who teach that the law must still be followed, at least to some degree, even by non-Jews who believe in Jesus, in order for one to be saved!

The Christian religious belief is simple! Those who still depend on the Old Testament and the Laws God gave to the children of Israel will die in their sin on this side of Jesus if they do not complete the Christian formula. However, those who convert and accept Jesus as their Saviour will be saved. The fact different theologies teach there may or may not be other qualifying actions that need to go along with this base idea is irrelevant. All this is what I like to call “formulated Christianity.” It is the belief that a formula will save you instead of the belief that we are saved only by grace through our faith, which God has offered every man from Adam forward!

Paul goes over this thoroughly in Romans chapter 3. He says the circumcised - those who are following the Law God gave to His chosen people - can be justified before God by the faith they are born into. In other words, what they have set in front of them through the teachings of the Law, from the time they are children, is God speaking to them through the very life that Law teaches them to live. They are, by tradition, being taught God's Word. Now to be clear, tradition will not save their souls, especially tradition not truly founded on what God's Law says but on what man makes up on his own. This is what the religious leaders of Jesus' day show us people are capable of doing, to an astonishing degree! However, the practice of truly looking into and attempting to live the Laws of God offers the circumcised faith; and if they are only willing to accept the free gift of a relationship with

God instead of just following the words as a religious tradition, this faith will justify them before God.

On the other hand, the uncircumcised - those living outside the law - do not have the guidance the written Law automatically brings so directly into the life and actions of a child born into the chosen people or a person who comes to live among them and as them. They do not have the opportunity to realize from the start, or even wake up one day to the realization that all the things the Law taught them to live was God speaking directly to them and using their lives to speak to others. In spite of this, they can still have faith brought about by the hearing of God's voice, which will come to them through the work of The Holy Ghost. It may possibly be the reading or hearing of God's written Word, which very much can include exposure to God's chosen people; or on this side of Jesus' first coming, it may originate through the teaching of the Gospel, which is the truth The Messiah has, in fact, come, that God has truly provided Himself as The Lamb to be slain for the ultimate washing away of our sins! (Gen. 22:7-8) Also, as we discussed before, it can be God simply speaking to them, not through someone but more directly to their heart. The fact this can be true is one of the reasons why Paul also talks in Romans about how Abraham himself was called to be the father of a chosen people, himself not yet having the Law of circumcision. (Rom. 4:1-14) If those without the Law also choose to reach out and take the free gift of faith God is offering, they too will be justified before God by their faith!

This is how it works. No one will be justified by the works they do or formulas they ascribe to: whether following the Law or not; whether saying a “sinners prayer” or not! Only what is done in their life because of and based on their direct relationship with God will be considered in the granting of eternal life. This, in turn, means those who are without the Law who do not walk in a relationship with God are doomed, and those who follow the Law, even to the letter, who are not doing it as part of their direct relationship with God, are doomed. What we see is that there is little to no difference between the Jew and the non-Jew, those who were commanded to carry out the ordinances of the Law and those who have not been, those who understand the man Jesus was The Messiah and those who have not come to receive that good news as yet, which includes those who have not yet understood or even heard of Jesus at all, nor had the chance to read,

and/or hear read, God's written Word. This is true for both Jews and non-Jews in all parts of the world, and not really any different than it was for those who lived before The Messiah's first coming. The only real difference is the element that we now have the good news that The Messiah has, in fact, come, and can teach that truth to those who have not yet heard or come to understand it! The only thing that separates anyone from anyone else when it comes to who will and who will not be saved is there are those who at all different levels of understanding, and in all different time periods, walk or have walked in a relationship with God; and there are those who did or do not!

All this is key to our understanding of the question we are addressing here, because the first thing that must be understood is there is a language weakness. Not just English versus other languages, but the inability to speak with simple words and convey full understanding. When we say there is a chosen people, we all very much understand we are saying there is a group of people who were chosen to be used specifically by God. However, the clearer and more full understanding is that there are those who, as a bloodline, were designated to be God's chosen nation, and unto them was committed the oracles of God. (Rom. 3:1-2) At the same time, when it comes to there being an overall category of people chosen by God, we should understand the fact there are people of all ages, time periods, and from all groups who chose, choose, or will choose to walk in faith. On Judgment Day, these will forever be separated from all others and taken to the place Jesus said He was leaving this earth to go and prepare for those particular individuals. (John 14:1-3, Rev. 20:11-21:8) This is the answer to our first question of, is there a chosen people at all? Yes, there are chosen people, and yes there is a chosen people. Chosen people are those who have a relationship with God, but the chosen people, as in the bloodline of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may be more clearly understood by referring to them as God's chosen nation. We should all understand what is being said either way, because the clear point is simply this, there is a specific people chosen by God to be His nation among the nations of the world. This, because through the course of time man has made choices as to how to conduct his life and this world, and at a specific point in the time line, there became a good reason to have such a nation on this earth! At the same time, God did this because it is not His will that any should perish, but that all come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9)

This brings us solidly to our second argument of this discussion, which is the question of, is that nation God established through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still the chosen people or have they been replaced by something such as the church? As I said at the first of this Q&A, it is hard not to know what my opinion is on this argument from what we've already talked about. However, we will look at this as more of a stand-alone issue, nonetheless.

Again, we simply go back to what Paul wrote in Romans chapter 3 where he poses the question about what advantage is there in being of God's chosen nation, and answers it by saying, in every way they have an advantage in that unto them was committed the oracles of God! In answering our first argument about there ever being a chosen people or that there still is, I may or may not have gotten the point across clearly that there is and has been because there is a need for them. To be blunt, that need was/is to hold the oracles of God so the knowledge of Who God truly is would never be lost among men! This brings us to another critical point about what Christians teach and many believe. You see, the reason true Christianity bases what it does on the Man Jesus Christ is because we claim to know who Jesus is. The problem is that many who call themselves Christians do not really know Who He is, especially in the context of the oracles of God!

Just as so many Christians point their finger at Jews for not believing in Jesus, Jews have the right to point back that Christians don't know why it matters to believe in Jesus, or anyone else as special, for that matter. Many Jews do not believe in Jesus because they do not accept the idea Jesus was and is The Messiah. This is in no small part because their religion has not accepted it. The problem with Christians is that they don't really understand what it means to say Jesus is The Messiah! Christians claim to teach the gospel, which means "the good news." However, very few understand that the good news is not simply that Jesus can save your soul. Remaining in this simple understanding is what leads much of what calls itself the church to get into or adopt practices much like the many pagan societies and their religions, which exist and have existed all over the world. If we never grow in our understanding, it's easy, whether we are aware it is happening to us or not, to slip into the idea that Jesus dying on the cross and raising from the dead is some magical event, not unlike the mythical stories of many

cultures who believe following death their god or gods await them in a "better place." This may be a starting point for many people outside God's chosen nation, but this kind of thought pattern is not where The One True God of the universe desires our understanding to end.

It is true that many people may never progress to understand a very great depth of God's plan and how it works. Fortunately, how far we make it on our path of understanding is not what we will be judged on, and that is why we have the words of Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Believing on Jesus as your Saviour and reaching out to Him for the relationship He wants to have with you is having faith in God, because Jesus is God. However, as one has time to live this life and experience the trials it contains, as well as hear the philosophies of men, it is of great benefit to know there is greater depth to God's plan for human existence than the pagan idea that we simply go on to be in a better place after death. The misunderstanding of this point is why so many Christians readily believe the word "faith" means blind belief! While we must trust God in the way a child trusts a parent, God wants us to grow and know Him better and better, not just grope in the darkness of mystical beliefs and misunderstanding. (Luke 18:15-17, Matt. 5:17-48)

There is great value in knowing that God, from the foundations of the world, did not create man to be unrighteous; but at the same time, God had a plan as to how to save man if man fell into sin. (Rev. 13:1-9) This is why even in Christian churches we are, or at least should be, thoroughly taught the creation story from Genesis, along with the events that followed. These stories tell us how we got to where we are and why Jesus had to do what He did. Now, Genesis just happens to be the first of five books called the Torah, meaning "Law;" and these five books, after the Ten Commandments, are the first written words God gave His chosen nation to have and to hold. The good news of the New Testament is Jesus came and proved that over the centuries God did not change His mind. In spite of all man's unrighteousness, God never decided His plan for our salvation just wasn't worth it. He still loved us so much, He followed through with the fact that because we fell short of His perfection, He would have to save our existence by coming down in human

flesh and sacrifice Himself for us! (Rom. 3:23, Matt. 20:25-28)

Now, all of what I just covered, of course, is a very shorthand version of the idea, but it shows us a simple point. We need the Hebrew Bible, or what many of us would call the Old Testament, if we are to gain a deeper understanding of God and how much He created us in order to be with us! Without the Hebrew Bible, especially the Torah, we can never know or understand what it truly means to say Jesus is The Messiah; and thus, gain the security of knowing He was and is the fulfillment of God's desire to save human existence for the very same reason He created us to fulfill in the first place. You see, Christianity is not just founded on, or has its roots in, these more ancient words. Whether Jew or non-Jew, true Christianity is to see and accept Jesus as the fulfillment of what those who have and will walk in faith through all the centuries since creation have been waiting on, or looking for!

Without the Hebrew Bible, the work Jesus did, and Christianity in general, seems to be nothing more than just another one of the many religions in this world. True Christianity is not, and it was/is vitally important to the saving of many souls that it not be seen in this light! Thus, God was not going to simply entrust the job of ensuring the knowledge contained in the Hebrew Bible and its continuance and demonstrative practices to just the world at large! No, God was going to establish a people who would see His Words as their very cultural heritage, and that is what God did by establishing a chosen nation!

This brings us to the heart of our discussion about, has God's chosen nation been replaced by something such as the church? If one has a good grasp on why God established the nation in the first place, one should simply be asking themselves, how could it? The true church consists of both Jews and non-Jews who have faith in God. This, again, has to do with that understanding there are chosen people and a chosen nation. As a group, as well as individual members, the church, of course, has a mission very directly related to what God's chosen nation is called to do, but there is no way the church could ever replace the nation as those entrusted with God's oracles! As a group, the Law is not part of the church's physical history. It was not intentionally integrated into the history of who we are as individuals, unless we are a member of the chosen nation. This fact is why the Law teaches that if

anyone not blood born into the nation wanted to truly live among them, they would have to become as one who was blood born in order to truly become part of the nation. (This truth speaks to why so many also have and do believe to this day that anyone who chooses to follow Jesus should take on the Law as a blood born, in at least some fashion.) The Law also makes it clear that the reverse of this is true. Those born into the nation who did not follow or want to follow the ordinances of the Law were to be cut off from the nation!

There was and still is no point in having a specific nation or group of people entrusted with God's oracles if they are not truly dedicated to them, and this specific point will come up again later in this study as we discuss the Jews truly being Israel of old. There is also no point in making those entrusted with the oracles a secret society of some kind. They were to be exposed to the world, not hidden. This point, again, is shown to us in the Torah, in the book we know as Exodus. As God brings Israel out from being slaves to what was at that time the most powerful nation on the earth, He does not sneak them out in the middle of the night, but literally uses Pharaoh's hard stubborn heart to do it in grand fashion!

All these points apply to the reason God's chosen nation could not be a group composed of a randomly chosen, among all walks of life, group that would be hard to find or identify. God wanted to separate the truth from the general religions of men in this world, by committing a specific people with the task of performing the demonstrative parts of the Law. This, again, is because performing ceremonies and formulas such as pagan religions do is not what having true faith is about. The "church" can create all the ceremonies they want, but they shouldn't; because only those things commanded by God should be part of our lives, and only they truly have the teaching value we need. In any case, nothing the Christian religion could come up with could replace the chosen nation and what was given to them directly by God, and the way it was given. This is why it is a fact that not only were those outside the nation not commanded to demonstrate the Law through the Levitical priesthood and practices all Israel was to perform, but many of these practices are forbidden to those outside the nation. (Lev. 22:9-10, Num. 3:5-10, Ex. 12:43-49) Again, this has to do with the fact God does not want these things to be composed of just whatever various cultural beliefs might make them. God wanted the demonstrative practices to be by

His design, in order to show what He had designed for humans, and to be the historical and cultural beliefs of a specific nation.

The Law was/is to offer the world faith, and to teach us what righteousness truly is. Along with this, it shows us what it means to be separated out for the purposes of God, which is what the word "holiness" means. This is why in spite of the fact there are many practices of the Law those on the outside of the nation can't directly be involved in demonstrating, by no means signifies non-Jews should not learn about and observe things such as the feasts and other practices of the Law. This is why God committed His oracles to a specific nation, but gave His Word to all the world! All the ordinances of the Law have prophetic meaning, much of which Jesus fulfilled when He came, and will continue to fulfill at His return. In the end, the point here is, there never is, or at least there should never be, any arguing over whose responsibility it is to be, and who we should look to as the primary holders and demonstrators of these ordinances!

Until next time, may we each continually choose to be the people God wants us to be!

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