

Lesson 29

GOD'S ELECTION OF ISRAEL

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ISRAEL, GOD'S ELECT PEOPLE

Election is the act of a divine action whereby God picks an individual or group of people out of a larger company for a purpose or destiny of His own choosing. The main Old Testament word for this is the verb *bahar*, which expresses the idea of deliberately selecting someone or something after carefully considering the alternatives. The word implies a decided preference for, sometimes positive pleasure, in the object chosen. The corresponding word in the New Testament Greek is *eklegomai*, *eklego* which expresses the idea of “choose out for oneself.” The Greek word *haireomai* is used synonymously to indicate God’s choice (i.e. *2 Thessalonians 2:13* *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth*).

The Biblical references to the Elect are of four main types

- The good angels
- In the Old Testament, Israel
- Jesus Christ as the Messiah
- In the New Testament, the Lost

The Bible always reserves the vocabulary of election for the covenant people and covenant functionaries drawn from Israel’s own ranks. One aspect we must keep in mind is that frequently God chooses a group of individuals for a blessing or judgment, but not all individuals ***within that elected category*** will enjoy or endure to the intended actions. The corporate election of the nation Israel is a prime example of this aspect of God’s choices.

With this definition in mind, let’s examine the following topics for a more complete understanding of God’s election of Israel and how one family chosen by God, became the most influential nation to have ever existed and continues to dominate world interest today.

- Israel’s Election
- Qualification of Israel’s Election
- Israel’s Acceptance of God’s Election
- The Expanded Covenant Between God and Abraham’s Descendants
- The Religious And Ethical Obligations Required By Israel’s Election
- The Law
- The Plan Of Salvation Within Judaism.
- God’s Election of Individuals For Specific Tasks
- The Blessings of Election Were Forfeited Through Unbelief And Disobedience
- Jacob I Loved. Esau I hated
- Summary Of The Election Of Israel

Israel's Election

Israel's Faith was founded on the belief that out of all of the nations of the world, Israel was specifically chosen by God to be His chosen people. As God's Chosen people they would receive special blessings from God so long as they obeyed Him and worshipped Him. They would become a shiny light of the Glory of God. They are therefore called God's Elect, or simply, the Elect.

God's choice of Israel had been made by means of two connected, yet complimentary events.

First, God chose Abraham and his wife by taking Abraham out of Ur, and bringing him to the promised land of Canaan and making there an everlasting, **unconditional covenant** with Abraham and his descendants and promising Abraham that his descendants would be an everlasting blessing to all the earth.

Secondly, God reaffirmed His everlasting, unconditional covenant by redeeming Abraham's descendants from slavery in Egypt, by bringing them out of bondage under Moses, renewing the Abrahamic covenant in an expanded form at Mt. Sinai and settling them into the promised land as their national home.

Each of these acts of choice is described as God's call.

Therefore, God summoned, in the one case Abraham, and the other, Abraham's descendants to acknowledge Him as their God and live to Him as His people.

Israelite faith looks back to these two events as God 'electing' them as His chosen people, His chosen nation.

The Election Of Israel



- Genesis 1:27—12:7** Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. [28] Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. [29] Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. [30] Sarai was barren; she had no child. [31] Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. [32] The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran. Abram Journeys to Egypt [12:1] Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; [2] And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; [3] And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." [4] So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. [5] thus they came to the land of Canaan. [6] Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. [7] The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.
- Genesis 15** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." [2] Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [3] And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." [4] Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." [5] And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." [6] Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. [7] And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." [8] He said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?" [9] So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." [10] Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. [11] The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. [12] Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. [13] God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. [14] But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. [15] As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. [16] Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." [17] It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. [18] On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: [19] the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite [20] and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim [21] and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.

- Genesis 17** Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. [2] "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." [3] Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, [4] "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. [5] "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. [6] I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. [7] I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. [8] I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." [9] God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. [10] This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. [11] And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. [12] And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. [13] A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. [14] But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." [15] Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. [16] I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." [17] Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" [18] And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" [19] But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. [20] As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. [21] But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year." [22] When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. [23] Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him. [24] Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [25] And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [26] In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son. [27] All the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.
- Genesis 22:15-18** Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, [16] and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, [17] indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. [18] In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
- Deuteronomy 7:6** "The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession"
- Nehemiah. 9:7** "You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, And gave him the name Abraham.
- Isaiah 41:8** "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend.

Qualifications Of Israel's Election

There is a mystery in this choice of God. Israel was not chosen because they were ...

- Choosing God first.
- Better,
- Of merit
- More faithful,
- More numerous,
- More obedient than anyone else.

Israel was in fact the reverse of attractive. Being neither numerous or righteous, but feeble, small and rebellious. There was no merit in Israel that warranted God's special attention, or special treatment as God's 'Chosen People' The only reason given for Israel's election is the gracious love of God. God's love was spontaneous and free, exercised in defiance of demerit, having no cause save God's own pleasure. God made it His delight and satisfaction to do Israel good simply because He resolved to do so. Thus the choice was God's sovereign will to select Israel.

- *Deuteronomy 4:37 "Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, He brought you out of Egypt by His presence and His great strength"*
- *Deuteronomy 7:7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,*
- *Deuteronomy 7:8 "but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*
- *Deuteronomy 9:4-6 "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. [5] It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. [6] "Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.*

It is true that in delivering Israel from Egypt, God was keeping a promise made to Abraham and there was a necessity of the divine character in that, for it is God's nature to always be faithful to His promises. But the making of the initial promise to Abraham had itself been an act of free unmerited love, for the patriarchs were themselves sinners. The cause of election was not of man, but solely within God.

Israel's Acceptance of Israel's Election

God expanded upon the election of Israel within the covenant that God made with Abraham's descendants at Mt. Sinai.

- The nation Israel during an assembly at the foot of Mt. Sinai chose to accept the terms of the covenant that signaled their election, therefore Israel was privileged to experience a personal relationship with God.
- As the apostle Paul wrote, the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (*Romans 11:29*) *for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*
- The election of Israel was a corporate election meaning it was earth-bound and described one nation's position and God's care for them while on this earth.
- This election had nothing to do with salvation, only the future of the nation Israel. Being an Israelite did nothing for salvation.
- The Plan of Salvation has always been by faith. For by **faith alone** is one saved. In the OT Times it was faith that God would send the redeemer, and in the NT Times it was by Faith that Jesus Christ was the redeemer that had God had sent as the perfect sacrifice for all of mankind's sins, past, present and future. OT Saints although Christ's blood had yet been shed for mankind were temporarily covered by the sacrifices.

ISRAEL'S RESPONSIBILITY

- The acceptance of the covenant also brought with it a heavy responsibility. The nation and all people within were to be obedient to God and follow His commands implicitly.
- If they refused to do God's will they would experience the heavy hand of God's judgment to the same degree that they had experienced the grace and blessing of God.
 - *"You only have I chosen [known] of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins" (Amos 3:2).*
- Israel's disobedience did not cancel her out as God's elected. But when Israel rejected Christ as their redeemer and savior, God turned to the Gentile nations to build His church.
- This, to Paul, was perhaps the ultimate mystery: One man's fall (Adam) meant the redemption of many and one nation's sin (Israel) meant the inclusion of all the nations of the earth.

One had to believe in order to be righteous. Just as God tells us that Abraham believed God and his belief was thus counted as righteous by God. (*Genesis 15:6 Then he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and He [God] reckoned it to him [Abraham] as righteousness*)

A lot of Israelites are awaiting hell because, although Jewish and a member of God's elected nation, they did not live by faith, nor did they really believe God would send them a redeemer from their sins. Most did believe that God would send a special King that would rise up out of the land and re-establish Israel as the greatest, most powerful, wealthiest, unbeatable kingdom of the entire world that would last forever and ever. And their lives would each be greatly blessed by this 'new kingdom. When the redeemer did arrive they chose to reject Jesus as their Messiah thereby rejecting God Almighty's plans for themselves.

The Expanded Covenant Between God and Abraham's Descendants

The goal of God's election of Israel was the blessings God wanted to bestow upon this people. Equally important was that not only would Israel learn to trust and obey God, by being 'Elect', but they would be a faithful people living by faith in God and counted as righteous.

God separated Israel for Himself and, ultimately, God's own glory through Israel showing forth His praise to the world and bearing witness to the great things He hath done. Israel's destiny, as His chosen people, was to enjoy the manifested presence in their midst and to receive the multitude of good gifts which God promised to shower upon them. Israel's election was thus an act of blessing which was the fount of all other blessings. Hence the prophets expressed the hope that God would restore His people and presence to Jerusalem after the exile, and reestablish conditions of blessings thereby saying that God will again choose Israel and Jerusalem.

- **Israel's election involved separation.** By it God made Israel a holy people, one set apart for Himself.
 - *Deuteronomy 7:6* For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.
 - *Leviticus 20:26* Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.
- **God took them as His inheritance and measure.**
 - *Deuteronomy 4:20* But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today.
 - *Deuteronomy 32:9-12* "For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. [10] "He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye. [11] "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions. [12] "The LORD alone guided him, And there was no foreign god with him.
 - *Psalms 33:12* Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.
 - *Exodus 19:5* Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;
 - *Psalms 135:4* For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession.
- **Israel was to declare God's praises**
 - *Isaiah 43:20* "The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people.
 - *Psalms 79:13* So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture Will give thanks to You forever; To all generations we will tell of Your praise.
 - *Psalms 96:1-10* Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. [2] Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. [3] Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. [4] For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. [5] For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. [6] Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. [7] Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. [8] Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name; Bring an offering and come into His courts. [9] Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. [10] Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity."

- **Israel was to bear witness of the great things God hath done.**
 - *Isaiah 43:10-12* “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. [11] “I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me. [12] “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And I am God.
 - *Isaiah 44:8* ‘Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none.’
- **God promised to protect and prosper Israel.**
 - *Deuteronomy 28:1-14* “Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. [2] All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: [3] “Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. [4] “Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. [5] “Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. [6] “Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. [7] “The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways. [8] The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you. [9] The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. [10] So all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you. [11] The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. [12] The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. [13] The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, [14] and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. God promised to dwell with Israel.
 - *Leviticus 26:9-16* So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. [10] You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. [11] Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. [12] I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. [13] I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. [14] ‘But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, [15] if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, [16] I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.
- **Election made Israel God’s people and Him their God in covenant together. It had in view a living communion between them and Him.**

The Religious And Ethical Obligations Required By Israel's Election

The obligations of Israel in these areas were far reaching. Election and the covenant relationship based on it, which distinguished Israel from all other nations, was a motive to grateful praise, loyal keeping of God's law, and resolute non-conformity to the idolatry and wrong doing of the unelected world. Also it gave Israel grounds for unfaltering hope and trust in God in times of distress and discouragement.

Irreligious Israelites, were betrayed by the thought of the national election into complacently despising other nations, and assuming they could always rely on God for protection and preferential treatment, no matter what their own lives were like. It was this delusion, and in particular the idea that Jerusalem, as the city of God, was inviolable, that the false prophets fostered in the days before the exile.

In fact, God had made it plain from the start, national election implied a strict judgement of national sins. The exile proved that God's threats had not been idle.

- *Psalm 147:19 He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel.*
- *Leviticus 18:2-4 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'I am the LORD your God. 3 You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. 4 You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God'*
- *Leviticus 20:22 'You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out.*
- *Deuteronomy 14:1 "You are the sons of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead.*
- *Ezekiel 20:5-7 and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day when I chose Israel and swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, I am the LORD your God, 6 on that day I swore to them, to bring them out from the land of Egypt into a land that I had selected for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. 7 I said to them, 'Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.'*
- *Isaiah 41:8-14 "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, [9] You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. [10] 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' [11] "Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. [12] "You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, Those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. [13] "For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.' [14] "Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you," declares the LORD, "and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.*
- *Isaiah 44:1 "But now listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen:*
- *Psalm 106:4 Remember me, O LORD, in Your favor toward Your people; Visit me with Your salvation,*
- *Micah 3:11 Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, "Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us."*
- *Jeremiah 5:12 They have lied about the LORD And said, "Not He; Misfortune will not come on us, And we will not see sword or famine.*

- Jeremiah 7:1-15 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, [2] “Stand in the gate of the LORD’S house and proclaim there this word and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the LORD!’” [3] Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. [4] Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’ [5] For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, [6] if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, [7] then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. [8] “Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. [9] Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known, [10] then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’--that you may do all these abominations? [11] Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” declares the LORD. [12] “But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. [13] And now, because you have done all these things,” declares the LORD, “and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, [14] therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. [15] I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brothers, all the offspring of Ephraim.*
- Jeremiah 23:9-12 As for the prophets: My heart is broken within me, All my bones tremble; I have become like a drunken man, Even like a man overcome with wine, Because of the LORD And because of His holy words. [10] For the land is full of adulterers; For the land mourns because of the curse. The pastures of the wilderness have dried up. Their course also is evil And their might is not right. [11] “For both prophet and priest are polluted; Even in My house I have found their wickedness,” declares the LORD. [12] “Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them, They will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it; For I will bring calamity upon them, The year of their punishment,” declares the LORD.*
- Ezekiel 13 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, [2] “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy from their own inspiration, ‘Listen to the word of the LORD! [3] Thus says the Lord GOD, “Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing. [4] O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins. [5] You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the LORD. [6] They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, ‘The LORD declares,’ when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word. [7] Did you not see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you said, ‘The LORD declares,’ but it is not I who have spoken?’” [8] Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “Because you have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against you,” declares the Lord GOD. [9] “So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel, that you may know that I am the Lord GOD. [10] It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash; [11] so tell those who plaster it over with whitewash, that it will fall. A flooding rain will come, and you, O hailstones, will fall; and a violent wind will break out. [12] Behold, when the wall has fallen, will you not be asked, ‘Where is the plaster with which you plastered it?’” [13] Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “I will make a violent wind break out in My wrath. There will also be in My anger a flooding rain and hailstones to consume it in wrath. [14] So I will tear down the wall which you plastered over with whitewash and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation is laid bare; and when it falls, you will be consumed in its midst. And you will know that I am the LORD. [15] Thus I will spend My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it over with whitewash; and I will say to you, ‘The wall is gone and its plasterers are gone, [16] along with the prophets of Israel who prophesy to Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,’ declares the Lord GOD. [17] “Now you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their own inspiration.*

- *(Ezekiel 13 Cont'd From the previous page) Prophecy against them [18] and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the women who sew magic bands on all wrists and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature to hunt down lives! Will you hunt down the lives of My people, but preserve the lives of others for yourselves? [19] For handfuls of barley and fragments of bread, you have profaned Me to My people to put to death some who should not die and to keep others alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies."'" [20] Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against your magic bands by which you hunt lives there as birds and I will tear them from your arms; and I will let them go, even those lives whom you hunt as birds. [21] I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people from your hands, and they will no longer be in your hands to be hunted; and you will know that I am the LORD. [22] Because you disheartened the righteous with falsehood when I did not cause him grief, but have encouraged the wicked not to turn from his wicked way and preserve his life, [23] therefore, you women will no longer see false visions or practice divination, and I will deliver My people out of your hand. Thus you will know that I am the LORD."*
- *Leviticus 26:14-18 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, [15] if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, [16] I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. [17] I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. [18] If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.*
- *Deuteronomy 28:15-27 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: [16] "Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. [17] "Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. [18] "Cursed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. [19] "Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. [20] "The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me. [21] The LORD will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land where you are entering to possess it. [22] The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish. [23] The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron. [24] The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. [25] "The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them, and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. [27] "The LORD will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. [28] The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; [29] and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you.*
- *Amos 3:2 "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."*

The Law

The law comes from the Hebrew word *Tora* which means instructions, guidance, direction.

God's primary purpose in establishing Hebrew law was to provide personal and national guidance for moral, ethical, social and spiritual living under the expanded Abrahamic covenant agreement. This was God's chosen vehicle by which He communicated and led both individuals and the nation into a deeper knowledge Himself and promote a resolute commitment to fellowship with Him.

Before Moses time in Egypt, the enslaved Hebrew people followed a wide smattering of national and local, customs, beliefs, practices, understanding of law, etc of Egypt. After the exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Sinai, God provided the formal basis for Hebrew law through Moses, who recorded everything God commanded him. Therefore God's agreement and the recording of the Torah became the basis for understanding covenantal law. As such it was intended to undergird the entire life of a community chosen above all other nations to exist consciously before God as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (*and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.* 'These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.' Exodus 19:6)

Judaism is undeniably a "religion of the book," but its also a faith based in teaching. Judaism reinforces the concept that the Scriptures are to be revered as God's Word, but this instruction from God needs to be interpreted and applied. Judaism has long understood the need for oral instructions that would help them understand God's written law. Jewish students of Scripture memorize not only the *Torah* but also the explanation of their rabbis. Over time these teachings had to be written down to survive the passage of time. That's what the *Talmud* is — an early collection of oral teaching about the Torah.

Originally, *Torah* referred to the first five books (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy) of the Bible, the Books of Moses (also called the Pentateuch). These books have a cherished position in the Jewish Faith as the earliest written instructions given by God through Moses.

Leviticus is a "Ritual Handbook" for people and priests, giving detailed instructions that are assumed in other places in Scripture where offerings are called for but not explained. Having been raised as slaves among the pagan Egyptians, Israel needed instructions on how to truly worship God. Thus Leviticus serves as Israel's manual of religious practice.

Written by Moses in the second millennium B.C., Leviticus is set during Israel's stay at Mount Sinai. It consists mostly of instructions of how God's people were to worship Him and preserve their religious purity by serving Him through sacrifices and other ritual observances.

A key theme of God's law is holiness—a characteristic of God that is demanded also of those who follow Him. Sacrifices to maintain and re-establish holiness are outlined, demanding obedience from every level of society, from rulers to peasants, but also making this ritual accessible to all, from rich to poor. No one is either above or below the expectation to worship correctly. This is shown by the severe punishment befalling even the sons of Aron, Israel's chief Religious leader, when they violate God's instructions.

No part of life was exempt from holiness, so these religious instructions often included secular areas of life. This includes discussions of food,, childbirth,, skin diseases and growth, normal and abnormal sexual relationships. Even domestic economic policies such as the ownership of land, or slaves are matters of interest. Religious areas of life are also explicitly discussed: Topics include priests, acceptable use of offerings and national festivals.

Over time, the messages of the prophets were collected as well other literary works. All of these books are revered as God's word, and in a general sense they might be referred to as *Torah*, but the books of Moses retained a special level of honor.

Jesus often mentioned “the law [and] the prophets”. (*Matthew 5:17* “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”)

There were the two main divisions of Hebrew Scripture at the time of Christ, the *Torah* of Moses and the collection of prophetic books (*Nabiiim*). Technically, there was a third section that eventually became known as “the Writings” (*Kethubim*) but this was often regarded as part of the “The Prophets.” (At this time, there was debate about which of “The Writings” should be included as Scripture).

Jesus once commented that “*These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.* (*Luke 24:44*)” Considering that the Psalms are the major component of the “The Writings,” Jesus was citing the three divisions of Hebrew Scripture that are still distinguished today.

The *Torah* was so respected in ancient Israel that a whole profession arose around it. By the fourth century B.C., and possibly quite earlier, scribes were employed to copy the sacred texts. They developed intricate rules to ensure the accuracy of their work, even counting the letters on each line. By Jesus’ time, scribes were not only copyists, but also Bible scholars.

In Jewish thinking, God’s instructions doesn’t stop with the ancient written words. There’s a rich appreciation in Judaism of the oral tradition passed down through the ages. In this sense the word *Torah* is expanded to mean the entire Jewish faith — the way of life transmitted through the centuries. The teachings included in the *Talmud* span nearly a 1,000 years, from 400 B.C. to over 500 B.C. Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph and his student Rabbi Meir began collecting this work early in the second century A.D. They sorted through the scriptural law and codified it, according to the oral tradition of the previous centuries. This project became the *Mishnah*, completed about 200 A.D. by Judah ha-Nasi. It makes up half of the *Talmud*. The other half of the *Talmud* is further commentary on the *Mishnah*. This is known as the *Gemara* (which means “Completion”).

There are actually two *Talmuds*: The Jerusalem *Talmud* (Also known as the Palestinian *Talmud*) and the Babylon *Talmud*. They share the same *Mishnah* but differ in their *Gemara*, each using commentary from rabbis in their particular region. The Babylon *Talmud* is considered the authoritative work.

A base cause of the conflict between God and the ruling leadership of the Hebrews over the centuries was derived from Jewish religious leaders’ interpretation regarding the role of the law and the leadership in its interpretation thereof. Long before Christ’s arrival, the law had become a burden, a yolk about the neck of the Hebrew people. Judah’s leaders had evolved into a legalistic system of creating and enforcing law as opposed to interpreting God’s word for the masses.

The Plan Of Salvation Within Judaism

We know that, in the New Testament era, salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ

- *Romans 10:9-10* “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”
- *John 1:12* “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,”
- *Ephesians 2:8-9* “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [9] not as a result of works, so that no one may boast”
- *John 14:6* Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”
- *John 3:16* “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

But, before Christ, what was the way?

A common misconception about the Old Testament way of salvation is that Jews were saved by keeping the Law. But we know from Scripture that that is not true. Salvation by faith, apart from the Law was an Old Testament principle. Paul the Apostle, taught that the purpose of the Law was to serve as a “tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” In fact Paul in Romans says that keeping the Law did not save either the Old or New Testament Jews because no one will be declared righteous and that the law was not established to save anyone, simple to make man conscious of sin.

- *Habakkuk 2:4* “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.
- *Galatians 3:11* “ no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “**THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**
- *Galatians 3:24* Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.
- *Romans 3:20* because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

If the Old Testament way of salvation was not keeping the Law, then how were people saved? Fortunately, the answer to that question is easily found in Scripture, so there can be no doubt as to what was the Old Testament plan of salvation.

- *Psalms 132:1-2* How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! [2] How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!
- *Genesis 15:6* Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.
- *Romans 4:6-8* just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.**8 “**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.**”
- *Romans 4:3* For what does the Scripture say? “**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
- *Romans 4:23-24* Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

In Romans 4 the apostle Paul makes it very clear that the Old Testament way of salvation was the same as the New Testament way, which is by **grace alone**, through **faith alone**, in **Christ alone**. To prove this, Paul points us to David and to Abraham, who were saved by faith. Abraham could not have been saved by keeping the Law, because he lived over 400 years before the Law was given!

Paul continues to establish that the Old Testament way of salvation was through faith alone and applies to all for all time. In Romans 4:23-24 he writes, “The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.” In other words, righteousness is “credited” or given to those who have faith in God—Abraham, David, and that we all share the same way of salvation, both Old and New Testament saints.

Much of Romans and Galatians addresses the fact that there is only one way of salvation and only one gospel message. Throughout history people have tried to pervert the gospel by adding human works to it, requiring certain things to be done to “earn” salvation. But the Bible’s clear message is that the way of salvation has always been through faith. In the Old Testament, it was faith in the promise that God would send a Savior someday. Those who lived in the time of the Old Testament looked forward to the Messiah and believed God’s promise of the coming Servant of the Lord. Those who exercised such faith were saved. Today we look back on the life, death, and resurrection of the Savior and are saved by faith in Jesus Christ’s atonement for our sins.

The gospel is was never an exclusive New Testament message. The Old Testament contained it as well: “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

- *Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*
- *Galatians 3:8-9 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

As early as Genesis 3:15, we see the promise of a coming Savior, and throughout the Old Testament there are hundreds of promises that the Messiah would “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21; cf. Isaiah 53:5-6). Job’s faith was in the fact that he knew that his “Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth” (Job 19:25). Clearly, Old Testament saints were aware of the promised Redeemer, and they were saved by faith in that Savior, the same way people are saved today. There is no other way. Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12, quoting Psalm 118:22).

God Election Of Individuals For Specific Tasks

Within the Elect, God chose individuals for specific tasks designed to further the purpose of the national election i.e. Israel's own enjoyment of God's blessings and ultimately, the blessing of the world. These were not chosen to be saved, rather to duties. It was God's desire, His will, that each would live by faith and righteousness reckoned to them due to their faith. Thus God elected individuals for duties to be completed as His Sovereign Will desired.

God chose ...

- Moses
 - *Psalm 106:23 Therefore He said that He would destroy them, Had not Moses His chosen one stood in the breach before Him, To turn away His wrath from destroying them*
- Aaron
 - *Psalm 105:26 He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron, whom He had chosen.*
- The priests
 - *Deuteronomy 18:5 For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever.*
- The prophets
 - *Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."*
- The Kings
 - *1 Samuel 10:24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people." So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"*
 - *2 Samuel 6:21 So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD.*
 - *1 Chronicles 28:5 Of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.*
- The servant savior of Isaiah's prophecy who suffers persecution, dies for sins, and brings the Gentiles light
 - *Isaiah 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.*
 - *Isaiah 49:1 Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me.*
 - *Isaiah 49:5 And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength),*
 - *Isaiah 50:5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back.*
 - *Isaiah 42:1-7 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.2 "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.3 "A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.4 "He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." 5 Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it,6 "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.*
 - *Isaiah 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*
- God's use of Assyria and 'my servant' Nebuchadnezzar, as His scourges
- God's use of Cyrus, a man ignorant of God as a benefactor to the Chosen race.

The Blessings Of Election Were Forfeited Through Unbelief And Disobedience

The prophets, facing widespread hypocrisy, insisted that God would reject the ungodly among His people.

- *Jeremiah 6:27-30* “I have made you an assayer and a tester among My people, That you may know and assay their way.” [28] All of them are stubbornly rebellious, Going about as a talebearer. They are bronze and iron; They, all of them, are corrupt. [29] The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; In vain the refining goes on, But the wicked are not separated. [30] They call them rejected silver, Because the LORD has rejected them.
- *Jeremiah 7:29-31* Cut off your hair and cast it away, And take up a lamentation on the bare heights; For the LORD has rejected and forsaken The generation of His wrath.’ [30] For the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in My sight,” declares the LORD, “they have set their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. [31] They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.

Isaiah foretold that only a faithful remnant would live to enjoy the golden age that was to follow God’s inevitable judgement on Israel’s sins.

- *Isaiah 10:20-22* Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. [21] A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. [22] For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.
- *Isaiah 4:3* It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy--everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem.
- *Isaiah 27:6* In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, And they will fill the whole world with fruit.
- *Isaiah 37:31* The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel, living in the time of that judgement, looked for a day when God, as part of His work of restoration, would regenerate such of His people as He had spared, and ensure their covenant faithfulness for the future by giving each of them a new heart.

- *Jeremiah 31:31-32* “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.
- *Jeremiah 32:36-39* “Now therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning this city of which you say, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine and by pestilence.’ [37] Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. [38] They shall be My people, and I will be their God; [39] and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them.
- *Ezekiel 11:19-21* Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”’ [18] When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. [19] And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, [20] that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. [21] But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads,” declares the Lord GOD.

- *Ezekiel 36:22-26* “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. [23] I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. [24] For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. [25] Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. [26] Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

These prophecies with their focus on individual devotion to God pointed to individualizing the concept of election. They [prophecies] gave ground for distinguishing between election to privilege and election to life and concluding, that while God had chosen the whole nation for living under the privilege of the covenant, He only made righteous those believing in Him and His message of salvation. These saved Old Testament Saints were to inherit the richness of the relationship to God Himself, which the covenant held out, while the rest forfeited their riches by their unbelief. The New Testament teachings about election assumes these same distinctions.

Jacob I loved, But Esau I hated

I was in a Bible study a few years ago and the old story of Jacob and Esau was given to prove that God makes decisions that saves one person and damns another.

My head dropped hearing this because that isn't the point of the story..... So let's review this story as it wonderfully describes the type of election Israel, the Chosen People of God, enjoys.

One of the most important passages that Calvinists use in upholding their doctrine of "limited atonement" is Romans 9:10-18:

“And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; [11] for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, [12] it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.” [13] Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.” [14] What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! [15] For He says to Moses, “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 man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. [17] For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.” [18] So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

The secret of understanding this passage is to notice carefully that Paul is not dealing with the subject of foreknowledge and election TO SALVATION, but with the nation of Israel and ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. This falls square in the decretive will of God.

In the first part of the chapter Paul deals with God's sovereignty in relation to eight unique spiritual privileges enjoyed by Israel. The Jews, however, felt that the promises of God had failed them for why would Israel nationally be set aside and the Gentiles brought into their place of blessing? Paul pointed out that God has always acted on the principle of sovereign grace.

God brought His people out of the nations as an elect people, separating them unto Himself. God had in mind a REGENERATED PEOPLE to enjoy the promises. As we considered previously faithful nationalism did ensure regeneration. Even more so, unfaithful nationalism.

Not all Jews were regenerated to God. God chose Isaac over Ishmael, Isaac was a child of promise. The same principle applied to the children of Isaac and Rebecca. There is no question here of “predestination to Heaven or Hell.” We are not told here in verses 10-13, nor anywhere else, that before children are born it is God's purpose to send one to Heaven and another to Hell. Nor is it taught here that God saves one by His grace and condemns the other to Hell. The passage has to do solely with Israel’s national privileges here on earth.

God's purpose was that Jacob should be the father of the nation of Israel, not Esau. Through Jacob the promised seed, our Lord Jesus Christ, would come into the world. God had pre-determined that Esau should be a man of the wilderness—the father of a nation of nomads, as the Edomites became. This is what the phrase "The elder shall serve the younger" really means. The phrase "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" teaches that God saw fit to honor Jacob and his descendants over Esau.

The election spoken of here is not a choice for eternal salvation or perdition, but God's predetermining the role that individuals and nations would play in this earthly life. Salvation was still available for Esau and any of his descendants willing to believe God. However, the land of Canaan, the law, the tabernacle, the temple service, the promises of national blessing were all reserved for Jacob and his posterity. So it is categorically wrong for Calvinists or anyone else to use Romans 9:10-18 in upholding their doctrine of "limited atonement."

Dr. H. C. G. Moule, an English evangelical Anglican theologian, writer, poet, author of over 30 books on doctrine, and the Bishop of Durham from 1901-1920 wrote regarding this passage:

"Election is always (with one exception, Romans 9:11) related to a community, and thus has close affinity with the Old Testament teachings upon the privileged position of Israel as the chosen selected race. The objects of election in the New Testament are, in effect, the Israel of God, the new, regenerate race called to special privilege and special service."

Dr. Griffith Thomas, Anglican cleric and scholar from the English-Welsh border country has been quoted by theologian Alister McGrath in the science-versus-religion debate.: *"It should be carefully noted that St. Paul is referring to the seed of Abraham typically and spiritually (cf. Gal.4:29)... The reference is, of course, to Jacob and Esau in their national capacity, and not to any 'hate' of Esau while yet unborn...It is therefore no question of personal salvation by absolute decree."*

Dr. H. A. Ironside, in his commentary on Romans: *"Be it observed that it was not before the children were born, neither had done any good or evil, that God said, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' These words are quoted from the very last book of the Old Testament. We find them in Malachi. Dispensationally, Jacob was loved, Esau hated. There is no reference to the individual as such. 'God so loved the world,' and therefore every child of Jacob or Esau may be saved who will."*

Another writer has also expressed the same thought: "Here and anywhere else that you have predestination and election, it is not to salvation. Nowhere does the Bible say that God has chosen this one to be saved and that one to be lost. This is not about salvation. This is about service. Let me show you that in Romans 9:12: *"THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."*

In verse 16 the word "it" does not refer to man's salvation or to his approach to God. The "it" refers to God's mercy. ¹⁶ *So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.* It is the extending of divine mercy that is not *"of him that wills."* Certainly, mercy toward a fallen race is of God, not man, and none of us deserves it.

Dr. Griffith Thomas says of this verse: *"God's mercy is not merely a response to human resolve ('him that willeth'), or to human effort ('him that runneth'). His own divine will is the one and only source of His mercy. All men are sinners, and as God pardoned Israel when they were rebels, why may He not pardon the Gentiles also?"*

The same essential teaching is brought out in Romans 9:17-18: *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." [18] So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.*

This is not speaking about salvation. God hardened Pharaoh's heart but not until after Moses went to him and said: God says, "Let my people go." And Pharaoh said, "Who is God that I should obey Him?"

In his Commentary on Romans, Dr. Griffith Thomas said: *"This would be an argument exactly suited to the Jewish objector. God was only acting upon the same principle as He acted upon in regard to Pharaoh when He hardened unbelieving Israel. It does not mean that Pharaoh was hardened for the mere sake of hardening, for we are told ten times in Exodus of Pharaoh hardening himself. He is used here as an illustration of divine power as manifested and revealed in the outcome of the monarch's self-will and hardening of his own heart. "I raised thee up," does not mean that he was created for the purpose of being hardened, but as Denney renders it, 'Brought thee on the stage of history.' It simply states that God brought about everything that belonged to Pharaoh's history, even though Pharaoh himself was perfectly free in his action...Pharaoh's heart was hardened by means of divine displays of power that were fitted and intended to have a precisely opposite effect...We know from the history that it was Pharaoh's disobedience alone that led to his being hardened. Neither Pharaoh nor anyone else was ever created in order to be hardened."*

There is nothing taught in the Bible about man being predestined to eternal damnation. If men are lost it is because of their unbelief and that they will not come to Christ. You must settle for yourself whether you will be among the elect of God or not.

Summary Of Israel's Election

Israel is God's Elect people, or nation, if you will. God called Abraham and his wife out of Ur and set him up in Canaan, the promised land. This was an unconditional election bound by an unconditional covenant of blessings for Abraham and his descendants. Abraham believed God and this belief was counted to Abraham as righteousness. These blessings came in the form of protection, land, separation from all other nations, national existence, prosperity, health, and other forms of blessings. Approximately 70 Jews moved to Egypt and Israel prospered there growing to a population estimated between 3-6 million in approximately 400 years. As Israel multiplied, they became enslaved by Egypt and God rescued the young nation as bound by His unconditional Abrahamic covenant. After deliverance from Egypt, God gathered the young nation, the descendants of Abraham, and expanded the covenant agreement with religious, political and lifestyle practices. God's offer of the expanded covenant was extended to the nation Israel and before Mt. Sinai, the assembly of all Israel endorsed the covenant and agreed to continue to be God's elect people. Israel was to be faithful to God, obedient to His ordinances and bring Almighty God's praises continuously before all nations. Failure to do so would have been punishment and the loss of God's blessings. Abraham was not saved because of his election, rather God reckoned Abraham justified because Abraham believed God. All Old Testament saints were saved by virtue of their belief in God and not their election. The prophets [prophesies] gave ground for distinguishing between election to privilege and election to life and concluding, that while God had chosen the whole nation for living under the privilege of the covenant and eventual salvation, God only chose out of Israel those whose faith resulted in regeneration to inherit the richness of the relationship to Himself which the covenant always held out, while the rest of Israel forfeited their riches and salvation by their unbelief. The New Testament teachings about election assumes these distinctions.