

A Chosen People

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Genesis 12, the Abrahamic Covenant. Most Christians are aware God chose Abraham. It's hard to miss, the Abrahamic Covenant is woven throughout God's word, popping up everywhere from Isaiah to Luke to Acts to Galatians. But while most Christians think of it as an archaic side note, we here see God's choice of Abraham as defining Christianity. Are you ready to explain that?

I Peter 3:15 says, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you”.

We're supposed to be ready to give an answer for our faith. And our faith is not like a lot of others. Our hope is wrapped up in that choice that God made thousands of years ago. We know salvation depends not just on our decision. It also depends on God's calling, on God's choice. John 6:44 tells us, “No man can come to Jesus, except the Father draws him”. We cannot choose to follow Jesus unless God first chooses us.

That verse in John is meaningless to most Christians today. Most people think God calls everyone, so God's calling becomes meaningless. But we know there was a time when God called Abraham alone. We know God chose one people. And we know the reason the Apostle John said what he said is because God's choice continues to matter today. Most Christians don't realize it, but the Christian hope of salvation rests on the Abrahamic Covenant. Are we ready to explain that?

This is going to be review for many today. I want to simply walk through the Bible, building a case from beginning to end for a special relationship between God and His people that does not exist with other nations. I know it will cover ground that's been covered before, but I think we need that sometimes.

This subject is so central to our understanding it can get taken for granted. For the new person in our faith or the child as he grows up and actually begins paying attention, I think it bears laying it out plainly and simply once in a while.

So today's lesson is designed for the Christian who's entirely new to the subject of God's chosen people.

Let's begin on common ground. In the Old Testament, God chose Abraham. God chose Isaac. And God chose Jacob. But more than that, God chose the descendants of those men. Genesis 17:19 says,

"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."

Not only did God choose Isaac, God chose Isaac's seed after him. In the Old Testament God chose a people, the people of Israel. Psalms 135:4 says,

"For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure."

God chose a people for His own. This is common ground for all Christians. As long as we're talking within the context of the Old Testament, no one disagrees with this fact. God chose Israel for His peculiar treasure.

But what does that mean? What did it mean to be God's "peculiar treasure"?

Well, first God gave Israel land. Genesis 12:7,

"7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land".

God gave Israel land and this was their perpetual inheritance. By God's law it could not be sold. It could be rented. It could be leased, but the land always returned to its original owner every 50 years in the year of Jubilee. The Promised Land was to remain Israel's inheritance forever.

There were also differences in law. In general, God says to apply His law equally to all people. Exodus 12:49 says,

"One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."

It didn't matter if you were an Israelite or an Egyptian, a murderer was to be punished the same, a thief was to be punished the same. But there are a few notable exceptions where God says to treat an Israelite differently than people of other nations.

Deuteronomy 23:20 says,

"20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury:"

And Leviticus 25 says an Israelite could not be held as a bondservant for more than 6 years, but verse 45 says "of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, ... and they shall be your possession.

46 And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel,

ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.”

So we have land and a few legal differences, but the truly important difference of what it meant to be God’s peculiar treasure had to do with God’s relationship with Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:6 says,

“6 For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

Israel was a holy people, a special people that God regarded above all other people.

Amos 3:1-2 says,

... O children of Israel...You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Israel was the only people God “knew” of all the families of the earth, the only people God had a family relationship with. In the Old Testament, God was only working with Israel.

Psalms 147:19 says,

“19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

20 He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.”

In the Old Testament, the word of God was given exclusively to Israel. God’s law was given exclusively to Israel. God did not reveal Himself to any other people in the world during the time of the Old Testament. Turn to Deuteronomy 7. It may be hard for people to accept today, but God actually chose to exclude other nations from the special relationship He had with Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:1 says,

“7 When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, ... Gergashites, ... Amorites, ...Canaanites, ... Perizzites, ...Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

2 And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.”

Here God named seven nations that were to be utterly destroyed, no mercy was to be shown, no parlay given, no marriages made. God excluded these nations. God wasn’t working to save

the people of these nations.

In Exodus 17:16 God's word says,

"16 For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

God wasn't trying to save the Amalekites. God wasn't working with the people of Amalek.

Numbers 1:51 says,

"51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."

God did not allow foreigners even near His tabernacle. Only Israelites were allowed.

Deuteronomy 23:3 says,

3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever:"

Ammonites and Moabites are another two nations God wasn't working with. They were forbidden from entering the congregation of God. Israel had a relationship with God that God did not have with any other nation. And look at verse 2,

"2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

The word "bastard" in verse 2 does a lot to clarify the extent of this exclusion. The word does not carry the modern meaning of out of wedlock that most people are familiar with. This is evident by the fact the ban extends to the tenth generation. We're not talking about a distant descendant of an out of wedlock birth. The word "bastard", according to Strong's Concordance comes from the Hebrew word "mamzer" which means a child born of a Hebrew father and a heathen mother. The mixture of an Israelite with a non-Israelite was excluded from the congregation of the Lord.

Most Christians today don't believe in exclusion. People think of it as wrong, as immoral. But whatever you think of the justice of these verses, one thing is clear, God did not treat all people the same in the Old Testament. God had a special relationship with one people which He did not have with any other people.

Given modern views on equality this is an important point to consider. Even if you believe things have changed in the New Testament; it's undeniable, in the Old Testament, God did not treat all people the same. At least at one time, God's word is very clear, God was dealing

exclusively with one people.

Some people will point out God did deal with Rahab and Ruth. God did deal with Egypt and Nineveh. But these exceptions only serve to reinforce the exclusive importance of Israel to God.

Consider why Rahab was saved. Rahab was saved because she helped Israel. If she had not helped Israel it's clear Rahab would have been destroyed along with the rest of Jericho. The saving grace for Rahab was her relationship with Israel.

Ruth is in the Bible because of her relationship with Israel. Egypt is in the Bible because of its relationship with Israel. When God killed the firstborn of Egypt, it was not because God was trying to make Egyptian mothers repent of their sins. God didn't give Egypt His law. God didn't give Egypt His word. There are no Egyptians recorded among the saved in Hebrews 11. God wasn't dealing with Egypt. Egypt suffered the plagues not because God was working on Egypt, but because God was defending Israel.

God sent a prophet to the Assyrians of Nineveh but God was preparing to use the Assyrians as his tool of judgment against Israel. If you look, every nation God sent a prophet to, He was using to work with Israel. God never sent a prophet to a nation that didn't have some relationship with Israel. No prophet was ever sent to China. No prophet was sent to India.

Israel was the only family of all the families of the earth that God knew, the only family God was dealing with in the Old Testament. Israel was the children of God. No other nation was. Why God chose Israel alone I don't know, but He clearly did.

And this exclusive relationship leads to one important distinction. God's peculiar treasure were commanded by God to remain separate.

Genesis 24:3,

"And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

Abraham didn't want his son to marry the people of the land. He told Isaac to take a bride from among his own people.

Genesis 28:1,

"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife

from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.”

Isaac didn't want his son Jacob to marry the people of the land. He sent him to find a wife from among his brethren.

It's common for Christians today to say this wasn't about keeping Israel separate as a people. They argue this was only due to pagan religious beliefs among the people of the land. They think restrictions on marriage were only to avoid intermarriage with people of other religions, not people of other ethnic backgrounds. But that's not the case.

When Isaac sent his son to his uncle Laban's house to find a wife, Laban was an openly practicing pagan. Jacob married the daughter of Laban, even though she was so attached to paganism she stole one of her father's pagan idols to take with her to her new home.

For ancient Israel religion certainly was a concern in marriage, but Abraham and Isaac were even more concerned about something else. Jacob willingly married a woman from a pagan family but he wasn't willing to marry someone who was not his kindred. Turn to Ezra 9. These men felt the way they did because God forbid intermarriage between God's chosen people and people of other nations. Israel was commanded to remain separate. Marriage was only allowed within people that were kindred to Israel.

Ezra 9:1,

9 Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands:

Ezra calls Israel the "holy seed" who have mingled with the people of the land. And drop to verse 6,

6 And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.”

Ezra is ashamed of the mingling of the "holy seed" with the people of the land. He calls it iniquity and a trespass against God.

When this inter-marriage between the holy seed and the people of the land occurred God commanded divorce and separation even from the little children that came from the marriages.

Ezra 10:2-3,

“2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We

have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.”

Again, many Christians think this command of separation was due to pagan religions. But the separation commanded here from even the children shows God’s concern was not just over pagan religious influence. Young children don’t hold religious beliefs. Babies are not born pagan, but the Bible didn’t say to keep the babies and raise them in a Godly home. It didn’t say to convert the children. It ordered separation, even from the children. The necessity of separation even from children born of these unions shows the separation is about more than just religious beliefs. God wanted Israel to remain separate. He drew a line between His people and the other races of men which He did not want crossed.

In Ezra 2:62 it says,

“62 These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.”

The men named here were priests in Israel. These weren’t pagans, they didn’t practice pagan religions, yet because they couldn’t prove their genealogy they were considered “polluted” and expelled from the priesthood. This wasn’t about religion. This was about a holy seed God wanted to keep separate from the rest of the world.

Recall again how Deuteronomy 23 forbids children born of mixed marriages from entering the congregation of the Lord. It doesn’t allow for conversion. Even after ten generations have passed, the descendants of a mixed marriage were barred from entering the congregation regardless of religion. This is the commandment Ezra was following that required separation from the children. This is a prohibition against crossing genetic lines. It’s a prohibition against racial intermarriage.

I know this stands in stark contrast to what most people consider moral today, but among Historians and Bible scholars there’s little dispute in the Old Testament, Israel considered intermarriage with other nations a sin. They were a “holy people”, a “holy seed” who were to remain separate. They were not to mingle with the people of the land. Whatever we think of that today, this is what God’s word says Israel was to do in the Old Testament.

So that’s the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God had a chosen people, a holy people, a peculiar treasure that enjoyed His unmerited favor.

But what about the New Testament? What does the New Testament say?

Most Christians today think Jesus changed things. Most Christians today believe the coming of

Jesus Christ ended the exclusive nature of the Old Testament relationship God had with Israel and opened that relationship up to the rest of the world. Let's see what the Bible says.

I Peter 2:9,

"9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;"

The New Testament also talks about a chosen people, a holy nation, a peculiar people, just like the Old Testament did. In many places it talks about God's calling and election. Does God still have a chosen people in the New Testament?

Luke 1:68,

"68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,"

This is the book of Luke. Here we are in the New Testament and the book of Luke is talking about the oath which he sware to our father Abraham. That's the Abrahamic Covenant. Luke lays out the reason Christ came and says Jesus came to remember the covenant He made with Abraham. Jesus came to redeem His people. Jesus came to perform the promises made to Abraham. Here in the New Testament, God's word is telling us the Abrahamic Covenant wasn't discarded by Jesus. The very purpose of Jesus was to remember it.

Turn to Matthew 15. Luke isn't the only place the New Testament says this. Jesus also confirms the continuation of God's covenant with Israel. Matthew 15:22,

"22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

Here we have a woman who is not a pagan. She calls Jesus Lord. There is no religious issue here, but there is an issue because the woman is not an Israelite. Verse 23,

"23 But (Jesus) answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

So at first Jesus ignores the woman, then when she continues he responds by saying He wasn't sent for her. He was sent only to Israel. And verse 25,

“25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.”

Now this is not intended as an insult here. Jesus is using an analogy to explain a truth. There are some things meant only for the children of God, and since she is not a child of God it's not for her. What's Jesus talking about? Most people think of everyone as a child of God. How is this woman not a child of God? And what is the bread that's only for the children?

Remember under the Abrahamic Covenant God only had relationship with Israel. Only Israelites were considered the children of God. And the children's bread? John 6, “33 ...the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world....

35 ...Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life:”

When Jesus says, “it's not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs”, He's talking about Himself. Jesus is saying He's only for the children, not for her. Redemption is only for His people, not for her. Verse 27 in Matthew,

“27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”

Jesus did bless the woman, but it's clear Jesus drew a line of difference between her and the children of God. At other times Jesus is quick to evangelize, but not with this woman.

He tells her the reason. He came to redeem the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He didn't come for her. He gives her physical healing, what she calls the crumbs which fall from the master's table, but Jesus tells her the bread of life is not for her. Jesus' actions here are the same as they would have been in the Old Testament. He's confirming the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant in the New Testament.

Jesus didn't come for this woman. It's not that Jesus hates her. He blesses her. But even the blessing the woman receives is part of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promise to Abraham includes a promise of blessing to all the families of the earth. That's the blessing Jesus gave her.

We also have Matthew 10:5,

“5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the

Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Here’s a passage I doubt many Christians hear quoted very often. Jesus tells His apostles not to go to certain people, only to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Here in the New Testament, Jesus confirms there’s an exclusive relationship between God and Israel just like there was in the Old Testament. The commission He gives His apostles is exclusive to Israel. It’s not for the world.

So there are passages in the New Testament which show Israel’s special relationship with God continued in the New Testament. Yet most Christians believe things changed in the New Testament and to be fair there’s a reason for that. Let’s look at some of the verses that lead people to think things changed.

John 1:11,

“11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

It’s easy to see how people interpret this passage as a change occurring in the plan of God. It seems to explain the verses we just read. Jesus originally came for His people, but then Israel refused Jesus and the common interpretation is God changed His plan and opened up redemption to the rest of the world.

That sounds like a fair interpretation if you’re just looking at this verse, but that interpretation doesn’t fit the context of the rest of the Bible. Remember what we read in Matthew. God knows the end from the beginning. Jesus already knew His plan for the world when He was talking to the woman of Canaan. If Jesus was soon ending the exclusive nature of the Abrahamic Covenant and opening redemption to everyone, why would He tell this woman He didn’t come for her? Why would He tell His disciples not to go to some people? Romans 9. There’s another explanation that makes more sense.

Let’s go to the book of Romans where it covers the same issue in a little more detail. Romans 9:24,

“24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.”

Here we’re talking about the same subject as John 1, the adoption of the gentiles into the family of God, the people who were not my people becoming the children of God. The common interpretation is when it says “I will call them my people, which were not my people” it’s talking about the rest of the world, everyone outside of Israel.

But the Apostle Paul tells us he is quoting Hosea here. This gives us context to refer to, to understand what’s being said. Let’s look at Hosea to see the context of what Romans is talking about.

If you have a reference Bible it will point you back to either Hosea 2:23 or Hosea 1:10 both of which are quoted here in Romans. Let’s begin a few verses before the quote. Hosea 1:6,

“6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

So we’re talking about how God decided to punish Israel for her sins. Verse 7,

“7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God,”

God punished Israel but had mercy on Judah. This is an important point of which many modern Christians are unaware. Israel was divided into two separate kingdoms. Since the time of Jeroboam God split Israel into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. Both were sinful, but while God decided to divorce the northern kingdom, to utterly take them away; God remained married to Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. Verse 9,

“9 Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”

Did you hear that phrase, “Ye are not my people”? That’s the phrase Romans uses. When God separated Himself from the northern kingdom, when He “utterly took them away”, God said the people of the northern kingdom of Israel were not His people anymore. Verse 10,

“10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; “

So even though these things happened, even though God separated the northern Kingdom from Him, Hosea tells us they’re not out of the picture. They will become numerous. And then Hosea prophesies something more about them, and this prophecy, the rest of verse 10, is what the Apostle Paul quotes in the book of Romans. The rest of verse 10 reads,

“and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”

That's the quote from Romans 9. But do you see what Hosea is saying in that prophecy? Who are the "them"? Who are the people who were told you are not my people? That's the northern kingdom of Israel. Those people were told they were not my people, but they will be told they are the sons of God. This is a prophecy that the divorced kingdom of Israel will be restored as the sons of God.

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul quotes Hosea because Hosea's prophecy was fulfilled through Christ. The reason Jesus said He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was because He came to restore Israel's relationship with God. He came to fulfil His promise to Abraham. When it says His own received Him not, it's talking about the southern kingdom of Israel who remained God's own; while the northern kingdom, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, are the people who God says were not my people.

That interpretation fits Hosea and it fits Romans, it fits John 1 and Luke 1, and it explains what Jesus did in Matthew. When it says there is neither Jew nor gentile, the word Jew is talking about the southern kingdom of Judah, the people of Israel who remained God's people.

The word gentile, on the other hand, comes from the Greek word "ethnos" which simply means nations. The gentiles, or nations, refers to the northern kingdom of Israel who Ezekiel 11:16 says were, "cast ... far off among the heathen, and ... scattered ...among the countries". These Israelites are called the nations because they were scattered among the nations.

The Bible doesn't call them Israelites anymore because God no longer called them Israelites. The name Israel means "to have power with God". Israel is the married name of God's people. "El" is one of the names of God. He literally put His name on a people. Israel is the name God gave them when they had power with Him, when they were married to Him. But these people were no longer the wife of God. When God divorced them He took His name away from them.

Go forward a couple chapters to Romans 11. Let's look at another passage that seems to point to change and see if it agrees with this interpretation. Romans 11:24,

"24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

This is the famous chapter which talks about the gentiles being grafted in to God's kingdom. And again it's easy to see how people draw the conclusion this is describing the grafting in of the rest of the world. It talks about wild branches and natural branches. It talks about the blindness of Israel allowing the gentiles to come in.

But then it says something curious. Verse 26,

“26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:”

“And so all Israel shall be saved”. That’s a curious statement. It says Israel was blinded while the gentiles come in, so all Israel could be saved. If this were talking about the rest of the world coming in, it would say “so all the world shall be saved”. But that’s not what it says. It says, “so all Israel shall be saved”.

This makes sense if you’re talking about blindness happening to the southern kingdom of Israel, while the divorced northern kingdom comes back in. Allowing one part of Israel back in means all of Israel can be saved, not just the part that remained with God. That makes sense. But it makes no sense if we’re talking about people who aren’t Israel. So we have confirmation of what we found in Hosea.

Let’s move on to the next passage.

Acts chapter 10:28,

“28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

And in verse 34 it goes on to say,

“34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

Here again people hear this passage and think it’s a reference to people outside the lineage of Israel with God telling us not to draw lines between peoples. It talks about people of “another nation” and says we shouldn’t think of any man as common or unclean.

But again that universalist interpretation creates a problem with context. Peter says “it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation”. What law is Peter referring to? The Law of Moses, right? The problem is nowhere in Mosaic Law does it call people of other nations unclean. Nowhere does it say it’s unlawful to keep company with people of other nations. In fact, if you recall the passage we read earlier, Israel was allowed by Mosaic Law to keep foreign bondservants. These were people of other nations who would serve in the business or in the home. So it’s clear the law of God allowed Israelites to interact with people of other nations, to keep company with them.

This fact leads some people to think Peter is only talking about man made traditions. And it’s true there were rabbinical traditions at the time that labeled all foreigners unclean, but there’s

more to this than that. First, Peter was an Apostle who was taught by Jesus Himself. I'm sure Peter knew the difference between God's law and man-made traditions. When Peter said it was unlawful he was talking about something that was truly unlawful.

We also have verse 15 which says, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." God says He cleansed them. He doesn't say they were never unclean in the first place. God says He cleansed them, so God is saying they actually were unclean at one point.

So we're talking about God's law not just man's traditions, but God's law doesn't call foreigners unclean just because they're foreign. Then what is Peter talking about? Deuteronomy 24. There are certain things that make someone unclean. One of them concerns divorce. Deuteronomy 24:1,

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."

Mosaic Law says when a husband divorces, it's because he's found some uncleanness in his wife. When God divorced the northern kingdom of Israel they were seen as unclean because God had seen some uncleanness in them. And go to Jeremiah 3:1,

"They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord."

This chapter in Jeremiah talks about God's divorce from Israel and His desire to remarry her. But it mentions another part of the law of divorce. In Deuteronomy it also says a divorced woman cannot return to her former husband. It is unclean.

So not only was divorced Israel truly unclean, the law says their return to God was unclean as well. It's not the other nations of the world that were unclean. It's not the other nations of the world that needed God's cleansing for them to have a relationship with God. It was divorced Israel who was scattered among the nations that was unclean and needed God to cleanse them. So when Peter says God told him to stop calling men unclean, he has to be talking about divorced Israel.

Romans 7. That leads to another point. Romans 7:2,

"2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

What’s Paul talking about here? He’s talking about how the death of a man releases his divorced wife from the law of her husband, from her obligation to him. And he says Christ’s death frees Christians from their obligation to their former husband. But this means God was their former husband because the death of Jesus died frees them to remarry Christ.

Why would Paul bring that up? Paul is the apostle to the gentiles, but the other nations of the world were never married to God. Only Israel was ever married to God. This passage has no relevance to the other nations of the world. In fact it only has relevance to divorced Israelites. Even Judah remained married to God and had no need to be freed of a past marriage obligation. The only people the Apostle to the Gentiles could be talking to are divorced Israelites.

Ephesians 3. Let’s move on to another passage. Ephesians 3:3

“3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery...”

Verse 6,

“6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

So the gentiles are to be fellowheirs. But context comes in verse 9,

“9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”

And verse 11,

“11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:”

So God’s plan to make the gentiles fellowheirs was His plan from the “beginning of the world”. It was part of the “eternal purpose” of Jesus Christ.

Problem: People think Jesus changed things in the New Testament, but this says God’s plan for the Gentiles has been His plan from the beginning, so nothing’s changed. In fact, if this was God’s plan from the beginning, then it was already God’s plan when He made the promises to Abraham. And that means Christ didn’t change the Abrahamic Covenant. Turn to Isaiah 61. In fact it means the Abrahamic Covenant and plan for the Gentiles are the same plan.

Isaiah 61:4,

“4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.”

This is one of the promises God made to Abraham’s descendants. In the coming kingdom of God, strangers will feed Israel’s flocks, the sons of the alien will be Israel’s plowmen. Whatever you believe Christ did with the Gentiles must stand in harmony with this prophecy because this prophecy came after God’s plan for the Gentiles.

Ezekiel 37. Here’s the plan of God. This is the eternal purpose of Jesus Christ. Ezekiel 37:16,

“16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions:

17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.”

And drop down to verse 21,

“21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”

And Verse 26,

“26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

That’s the coming kingdom of God. That’s the plan of God: to reunite Israel into one kingdom, to be their God and for them to be His people. So is that prophecy true? Is that what Jesus did? Or did He change things? The book of Ephesians says Jesus didn’t change anything, He’s always had the same plan from the beginning of the world.

Let’s look at one more passage. Acts 17:26,

“26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, “

People point to this statement to justify intermingling all peoples, to say there are no legitimate differences between ethnic groups. At this point we could discuss who Paul meant by “nations”, but that’s not really even necessary. Let’s just continue reading the rest of the verse.

“and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;”

Paul says God made of one blood all nations of men and immediately follows that by acknowledging God also determined the various destinies of those nations, God also set boundaries on those nations. Of course God made everything and everyone. That’s the point Paul was making to the Athenians, but that in no way changes the fact God also made a covenant with Abraham and has a different relationship with Israel than He does with other nations.

Pauls’ statement is a reference to Deuteronomy 32:8 where it says,

“8 When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

9 For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”

To say God made everyone doesn’t change the fact God chose Israel for His own. The passage in Acts 17 actually confirms that.

The Bible is really very clear on the subject. God chose a people for His own. That hasn’t changed. When it talks about Jew and Gentile, Jew nor Greek, it’s talking about rejoining divorced Israel with the Israelites that remained married to God. It’s only peoples’ lack of familiarity with the history of God’s people that leads to the Universalist interpretation.

The New Covenant is not universal. If it was, the Bible would say the New Covenant was made with the world, but it doesn’t. Hebrews 8:8,

“8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:”

And verse 10,

“10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:”

The Bible clearly says the New Covenant was made with Israel. That’s the covenant of peace Ezekiel 37 prophesied God would make with Israel. Nowhere does the Bible say God made a new covenant with the world. It says He’s making a new covenant with the house of Israel and

the house of Judah.

When the Bible talks about adopting gentiles into the family of God it's makes it clear who it's talking about.

Galatians 4:4,

"4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Who receives the adoption of sons? Them that were under the law. Only Israel was ever given the law. It's saying the adoption of sons is for the lost sheep of Israel. And the book of Romans confirms that.

Romans 9:4 says it right out,

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

The Bible is really very plain and clear on the subject. When it's talking about the adoption it says it's talking about Israel, the adoption pertains to Israel. The glory, the covenants, the law, the promises, even the coming of Christ all pertain to Israel. The conclusion is clear if you simply accept God's word for what it says.

Jesus Christ came to redeem His people. You can look at who the New Testament is written to and it's clear there too. The book of Hebrews of course is written to Israel. But so is the book of James. James 1:1 begins, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting."

Paul tells the Corinthian church their fathers were baptized with Moses in the Red Sea. That's Israel. The Corinthian Church were Israelites.

Paul's letter to the Romans is written to a people He says were divorced from God. That's Israel. The Roman church was made up of Israelites.

The Gospel of Luke talks about "Our father Abraham". John says, "Our fathers ate manna in the desert". At the day of Pentecost Acts 2:5 says the people gathered were,

"Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."

That's the day of Pentecost and according to verse 22 the sermon was preached to the "men of

Israel”.

In Acts 3 the crowd is addressed, “Ye men of Israel”. In Acts 5, Stephen is stoned as he delivers a history of Israel and begins by saying, “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham”.

Remember Matthew 10, Jesus sent the early church to preach exclusively to Israelites. That’s what they did. The New Testament was written to Israelites.

What about the great commission? Didn’t Jesus eventually tell His disciples to go to all the world? Yes, He did. But it’s not that Jesus changed. Jesus didn’t contradict Himself. In Matthew 10, when Jesus told His disciples to go only to the lost sheep of Israel, He was saying the same thing He said in Mark 16, “go ye to all the world”. The lost sheep have been scattered through all the world. Jesus told His disciples to go to them all, to go to every nation, but they were to go only to the lost sheep among those nations.

Jesus spoke to the woman at the well who was a Samaritan, but He did so because, as John 4:12 says, she was a descendent of Jacob. She was one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The disciples were sent throughout the world, but they preached only to one people. Look at the fruits of their preaching: Christianity was established only among one people. Who have been and still are the Christian nations of the world? It’s only been one people, the Caucasian people.

Jesus told His disciples to go only to the lost sheep of Israel. They converted one people, the Caucasian people. Jesus said “My sheep hear my voice”. The Caucasian people are the one people in the world who readily heard and accepted God’s word. Christianity never really took root in any other people.

That’s just what the Bible says. Yet people resist it because it seems unfair. Isn’t it unfair God would choose one people over all others? Shouldn’t God choose the good man no matter who he is, rather than choosing only among one people? You know, the Apostle Paul knew we would think that. Paul addresses exactly that question. Romans 9:8,

“8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

It’s true, you aren’t saved just because you’re a descendent of Abraham. You’re not a child of God just because you’re an Israelite. Who you are doesn’t save you. We are saved by faith.

But what Universalism forgets is God is still part of the equation. Universalism makes it all about us. It’s only about our faith, our choice. They say the children of promise are children of faith. If you believe Jesus, that makes you a child of promise. But that’s not what Paul says. Read on in verse 9,

“9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

The promise is talking about election, about God’s choice. A child of promise is a child who God has chosen. It’s not talking about our faith. Yes we need faith, but no man can come to Jesus except the Father first draws him. We need faith, but before that God has to choose us first. And God did choose. God chose Jacob. He didn’t choose Esau. God chose Israel. He didn’t choose everyone. Verse 14,

“14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.”

There’s our question. Isn’t that unfair? That’s what people think, but it isn’t. Verse 15,

“15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

God’s word clearly says He chose a people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. We can resist that but as Christians we should accept it and thank God for it.