

Chosen of God

Many, many religions today teach that those who follow said beliefs are in favor with, and thus will receive a reward from, whomever their god is, or gods are, that they give homage to. Whether their deity be Buda, Allah, the 'earth' or other manmade god, man has always believed in something even if his belief isn't in anything at all. It's still a belief. So can all these various belief systems with their differing doctrines, creeds and teachings be true, especially when they contradict each another? Which is why so many zealots kill in the name of their religion. And how many can trace their roots back to the very beginning or when "people began to call upon the name of the Lord" (*Gen 4:26*) Who "created all things, and by [His] will they existed and were created" (*Rev 4:11*)? And what is this force within all people that urges us to desire to worship someone or something? Could it not be that part of the true God Who created mankind "in His own image" (*Gen 1:27*) when He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living creature" (*Gen 2:7*)? With everyone believing they are the "chosen few", according to their beliefs based on being the only "enlightened" or according to a vainly perceived higher intelligence than everyone else, who really are the chosen of God? As Christians, we understand and believe that the Bible is the only document wherein we can trace a beginning, a Genesis. And since no other document contains older references (*in truth*) to the beginning, or even before the beginning, it alone is our source when searching for truth in any matter, especially when it comes to the subject of this lesson. There will always be those who will try to make us stutter by stating "you think you are the only ones going to Heaven"! With that we need to lovingly and politely respond with Jesus' own words.

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

Everyone is given the opportunity to search for the truth but most refuse to do so for whatever reason unless it happens upon them out of the blue and they accept it. We understand, according to New Testament teachings, where God has always had a heart for, and will reward those, who love Him and do His will.

Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him.

With that said, who are "those who love Him" and are thus His chosen? And remember what Jesus said in Jn 14:15- "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments". So those who are obedient to the word of God are the ones who make up the 'chosen' out of love for, and obedience to, the Godhead. There have always been certain faithful individuals that have loved God and have done His will but we need to focus on, as a whole, the overall group of people who, in the end, constitute "the elect of God" (*Col 3:12-KJV*). First, if we are referencing what we've determined as the most ancient of collected documents (*i.e., the Bible*), we need to look at God's initial group of chosen people, the Hebrews. What was it that made them so special in the first place and how did they remain in such an elevated position? Notice the inspired words spoken by Moses to the Israelites before they entered the promise land.

Old Testament Israel

Deu 7:1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves (*God is not impressed with size of armies. He is able to use the few to conquer the many.*), 2 and when the LORD your God gives them over to you,

and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.

This is where the accusation of Biblically illiterate nonbelievers comes from when speaking, of course in ignorance, of the alleged atrocities, or the sanction thereof, made by “Christians” and how we aren’t to be so judgmental against others which include Islamic terrorists for the violence they commit in the name of Islam. On Friday, Feb 6 at the National Prayer Breakfast Pres. Obama stated the following, as though almost excusing it, concerning Muslim violence since the 1980s.

“Lest we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ,” Obama said Friday. “In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ.”

First of all, **true Christianity abhors slavery!** Only those who falsely “claimed” they were Christians participated in the slave trade, justifying their hatred for people of color with a perverse understanding of the New Testament. And for those who blame Christians for the mass killings going into the promised land, God was not speaking to Christians since Christianity didn’t exist at that time. The Jews then used carnal weaponry under God’s command, not mere man’s, and since Christians are under the New Covenant the armor and weaponry we are to bear are spiritual.

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand (*Gk.436- to stand against: -resist*) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth**, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, 15 and, as **shoes for** your feet, having put on **the readiness given by the gospel of peace**. 16 In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God**, (*Emp. added*)

Our fight is against Satan, **not unbelievers!** It is a spiritual battle with spiritual weaponry and armor. The Jihadists claim they are fighting a “Holy War” to make converts but with physical weapons and terroristic tactics and are only doing what the Quran demands.

The Quran contains at least 109 verses that call Muslims to war with nonbelievers for the sake of Islamic rule. Some are quite graphic, with commands to chop off heads and fingers and kill infidels wherever they may be hiding. Muslims who do not join the fight are called 'hypocrites' and warned that Allah will send them to Hell if they do not join the slaughter.

TheReligionofPeace.com
Guide to understanding Islam

Surah 47:4- Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens. That (is the ordinance). And if Allah willed He could have punished them (without you) but (thus it is ordained) that He may try some of you by means of others. And those who are slain in the way of Allah, He rendereth not their actions vain.

A true follower of Islam is commanded to take the lives of those who will not convert by beheading them. And according to this Surah, if they die when performing such an act in the name of Allah, they will be rewarded in the afterlife. Such is not the way of Christ. And the “crusades”, that so many speak boldly but in ignorance of, were not based on a God inspired, Biblical commission but were ordered by the apostate church carried out by the duped, illiterate armies of the Pope, the first of which was Pope Urban II in 1095 AD. Thus the crusades should never be associated with true Christianity. And shame on all who wish to link the faith to such atrocities out of disdain for Christianity and the moral high ground she has taken! Jesus never taught His followers to force the faith on the nonbelievers through terrorism or any **other** means! We’ve always understood we are to ever be “speaking the truth in love” (*Eph 4:15*). Now, back to Deuteronomy and how Moses went on to warn the Israelites not to marry from among the heathen nations they were soon to occupy.

Deu 7:3 You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, 4 for they would turn away your sons from following Me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and He would destroy you quickly.

This remains a requirement for Christians when choosing a spouse today if we wish to please God and remain a separated people according to the apostle Paul.

2Co 6:15 What accord has Christ with Belial (*bel-ee'-al*)? Or what portion does a **believer** share with an **unbeliever**? (*Emp. added*)

Not that a believer has an excuse to divorce their unbelieving spouse either. Paul dealt with that issue in his (*what’s been understood as*) first letter to the Corinthians.

1Co 7:13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

It’s possible that this example was given in light of the fact that the wife became a Christian after she was married. But what if the Christian chooses to not respect sound Biblical teaching and marry a non-Christian anyway, whether being new to the faith or not? Have they violated some ordinance of God?

Numerous Christians can testify to the fact that their spiritual lives have been made infinitely more difficult since yoking themselves with those who do not share a commitment to God, to say nothing of bringing children into an environment where there are divergent spiritual influences. The fact that some Christians have converted their unbelieving mates eventually is wonderful indeed; that circumstance, however, hardly stacks up against the many more instances of disciples who have weakened under such a strain, ultimately abandoning their devotion to the Savior.

There are many circumstances in our lives which are irreversible. Is it not possible that one could realize that he did not approach some of his earlier decisions with the highest of ideals?

There is nothing wrong with asking God’s forgiveness for such superficial choices, resolving to make more spiritually responsible determinations in the future and working then to make the very best of one’s present situation.

Wayne Jackson- The Christian Courier
Should a Christian Marry Outside the Faith?

The admonition is to not marry a nonbeliever but if one so chooses to, he or she would have to deal with the consequences along with their commitment to their spouse as they should under the laws of marriage.

Rom 7:2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage.

Moses then went on to warn God's chosen people concerning how they were to deal with the idols that the heathens were worshipping.

Deu 7:5 But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

Later Paul would warn Christians of this very thing. Today our idols can be anything that's opposed to living a life devoted to God.

2Co 6:16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty."

Deu 7:6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

As God chose Israel to be "His treasured possession" under the Old Covenant, He has chosen the new, spiritual Israel to be "a people for His own possession" (1 Pet 2:9) in the New.

2Th 2:13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, **through** sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14 To this He called you through our Gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Emp. added*)

New Testament Israel

Rom 2:28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

The church at Rome that Paul wrote to was made up of mainly Gentile converts. In discussing how "God shows no partiality" (2:8) the apostle led into a dialogue that many in the denominational world haven't quite grasped. It is the discussion on the Jews no longer being God's chosen people and how the Law had been nailed to the cross of Christ (Col 2:14). Such thinking seems to be so confusing to the countless masses who believe the Jews will always be the chosen, not having dealt with where the Christians stand accordingly. Many believe we are still under the "ten commandments" substituting the Sabbath with the Lord's day. Such would be considered "adding to" a teaching that God hasn't sanctioned (Rev 22:18). That said, what of the

Jew Paul was speaking of in Romans chapter 2? That topic is speaking of the spiritual Jew or spiritual Israel. Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, make up 'spiritual' Israel. Under the Mosaic Law, circumcision of the males' foreskin was commanded (*Lev 12:3*) but under the New Covenant "circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter (*a.k.a., the O.T. law*)". Also under the Levitical system, animal sacrifices, where the animal was "without blemish", were commanded as works to be fulfilled in order to continually be right in the sight of the Lord. Not so under the New when Christ fulfilled the Law (*Mat 5:17*) rendering His own body as the final, perfect sacrifice.

Heb 10:9 Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Thus as His followers we too are to offer up our own lives as He did His to the Father but not in the same brutal manner in which He did.

Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a **living** sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (*Emp. added*)

As such "living sacrifices" we are to, as 1 Jn 4:1 states, "test the spirits" in order to distinguish what God's will is for the redeemed. And no longer under the sacrificial system, our forgiveness and sanctification as the "few there be that find [the strait gate]" (*Mat 7:14*), come from the unmerited favor we receive by the mercy of God. Not from the Old Testament Law of Moses.

Rom 11:5 So too at the present time there is a remnant (*Gk.3005- remainder*), chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works (*of the law, thus making the Old Law null and void*); otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

If God's **un**merited favor was obtained by merit, it would no longer be unmerited but **earned** favor. In other words, something we've earned out of our own works. We can't earn God's favor. So if grace is gained by works, it is no longer grace and our salvation could be obtained by the works of the Law. But since we live under the New Covenant between God and man, in order to be saved we follow the precepts found therein and no longer offer up animal sacrifices to please Him. Again, Jesus did that once for all time. It is only through His blood that spiritual Israel will be saved.

Rom 11:26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; 27 "and this will be My covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Referring to the previous verse (25) and "the fullness of the Gentiles" being added to the vine (17), Paul was speaking of the good olive tree and those who continue to be grafted into it (*both Jew and Gentile converts*). Just because Jews lived under the Old Covenant they weren't automatically added to the church once she came into existence during the Feast of Pentecost. They had to be converted to the message of the Gospel just as the Gentiles did. Paul was addressing "spiritual" Israel, the true people of God, in making this statement, and not all "physical" Israel.

Rom 9:27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a **remnant** of them will be saved, 28 for the Lord will carry out His sentence upon the earth fully and without delay." (*Emp. added*)

Along with a fraction of O.T. Israel, that remnant that God will save exists today in the form of Christ's church. As Jesus stated when speaking of the fall of Jerusalem how God has always looked out for His people then, He still does for us today.

Mat 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. **But for the sake of the elect** those days will be cut short. (*Emp. added*)

But there is another day coming, and we know not when.

Mat 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are **blessed by My Father**, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (*Emp. added*)

We can either become sheep or remain goats. As free agents, God has given us the freedom to choose which. One might say it's a simple choice to choose Heaven over Hell isn't it? Well, it is. And the majority believe they're headed to Heaven but haven't quite considered how or have given much thought about having to make some changes in order to get there. The things of this life have a death grip on most people to the point where they say "it doesn't get any better than this!" Maybe not for them but to the chosen of God, it certainly will get better! As long as we remain faithful to the end to...

1Jn 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

Why be part of the world that doesn't know Him when the gift of eternal life is free for the accepting? Haven't you heard? If you have, don't you believe? If so you need to repent of your sins, acknowledge Christ as the Son of God and have those sins washed away by being immersed for forgiveness "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*Mat 28:19*). Only then will you become a member of the Lord's body the church and be part of the chosen of God.

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