

## **Doctrine of the Choosing of Israel**

1. The question as to why God chose the Hebrew people to form the nation of Israel and receive His special favor is rooted in His sovereignty.
2. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines sovereignty as:

“the state of being free from the control or power of another.”

Webster’s New World Dictionary defines sovereign as:

“being above or superior to all others; chief, greatest, supreme; supreme in power, rank or authority." It says sovereignty is "the state or quality of being sovereign; the status, dominion, rule or power of a sovereign; supreme and independent political authority."

3. A. W. Pink provides a succinct spiritual definition of God’s sovereignty.

“To say that God is sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou? (Dan. 4:35).

To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Ps. 115:3).

To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best.

To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible.”

4. Unfortunately, the contemporary view of God is very limited, and needs to be challenged by biblical revelation.

### ***Special Note.***

In his excellent book, *Your God is Too Small*, J. B. Philips writes of his numerous conversations with many people whose concepts of God were so limited that he felt it was no wonder they had little or no faith. At best, he concludes, many seem to think of God as nothing more than a greater man; an angry judge; a soft and kindly grandfather; or a scientist who invented the universe, wound it up and walked away from it, unconcerned as it operated on its own.

5. Turning to the question of Israel, the Bible declares that God chose Israel because God wanted to choose Israel.

- *Deuteronomy 7:7 The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:*

6. The choosing of Israel by God was an act of His sovereign will. However, God's selection was not without a predetermined purpose. God always has a stated purpose, for what He predetermines shall come to pass, for He works all things out according to the counsel of His own will. The purpose of God in choosing Israel over all other nations was fourfold.

- God wanted to manifest His love. Love is a facet of God's essence that He wanted to reveal but, in order for love to be manifested it needs an object of affection. The nation of Israel would serve that divine purpose beginning with the founder of the Hebrew race, Abraham, and his descendants, Isaac and Jacob, and through them establish the nation through the lawgiver, Moses. Like a mighty stream, the love of God continued to flow with blessings until the nation was large, strong, prosperous and ready to stand as an independent nation among the other civilizations on earth. God chose Israel in order to have a people to love in a special way.

*"...because the LORD loved you..."* Israel was chosen (Deuteronomy 7:7).

The love of God for Israel was an exclusive love. A sovereign God has the right to love whom He wills.

*Amos 3:2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth:*

- God wanted to honor His covenant of grace. God is a covenant making and covenant keeping God. Having made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God determined to keep His covenant, and so the Hebrew people had to multiply and prosper.

Israel was chosen *"....because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers"* (Deuteronomy 7:8).

- God wanted to have a holy people. God wanted to have a people who were in the world but not of the world. The LORD wanted a people that would love and honor Him for Himself as He was revealed, and not as vain imaginations conceived Him to be. God wanted someone to love Him alone, not as part of a pantheon of gods.

*Deuteronomy 7:6 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 to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

*Exodus 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

***Special Note.***

When national Israel failed in her responsibility to be holy, worship the LORD, and disseminate the gospel, their spiritual privileges found fulfillment in the New Testament expression of the church.

*1 Peter 2:9 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:*

- God wanted a special nation whom He could use to be a source of blessing. The LORD chose Israel in order to be a source of blessing to the other nations on earth. Beginning with Abraham, “*all families of the earth*” were to be blessed. From the tribe of Judah the Messiah would come.

*Genesis 12:3 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.*

7. While God’s special love and favor rested upon national Israel, individuals from other nations (gentiles) were welcomed into covenant relationship and blessing by meeting God on His terms. The stranger was to receive the sign of circumcision if a male. Then, the Passover was to be kept.

- *Exodus 12:48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

8. Once a person embraced the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, once a person embraced the sign of the covenant, if a male, once a person was covered by the blood of the Passover, they were to be considered equal, and not oppressed or mistreated.

- *Exodus 12:49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.*

- *Exodus 22:21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

9. One example of a “stranger” being welcomed in the covenant of Israel is Ruth, the Moabitess.

- *Ruth 1:16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.*

10. The principle of uniting “the stranger” (Gentiles) with the Hebrew people (Jews) would find its greatest fulfillment in the New Testament expression of the church.

- *Ephesians 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

11. Fortunate indeed are those who receive the special blessing of God’s sovereign grace and mercy.