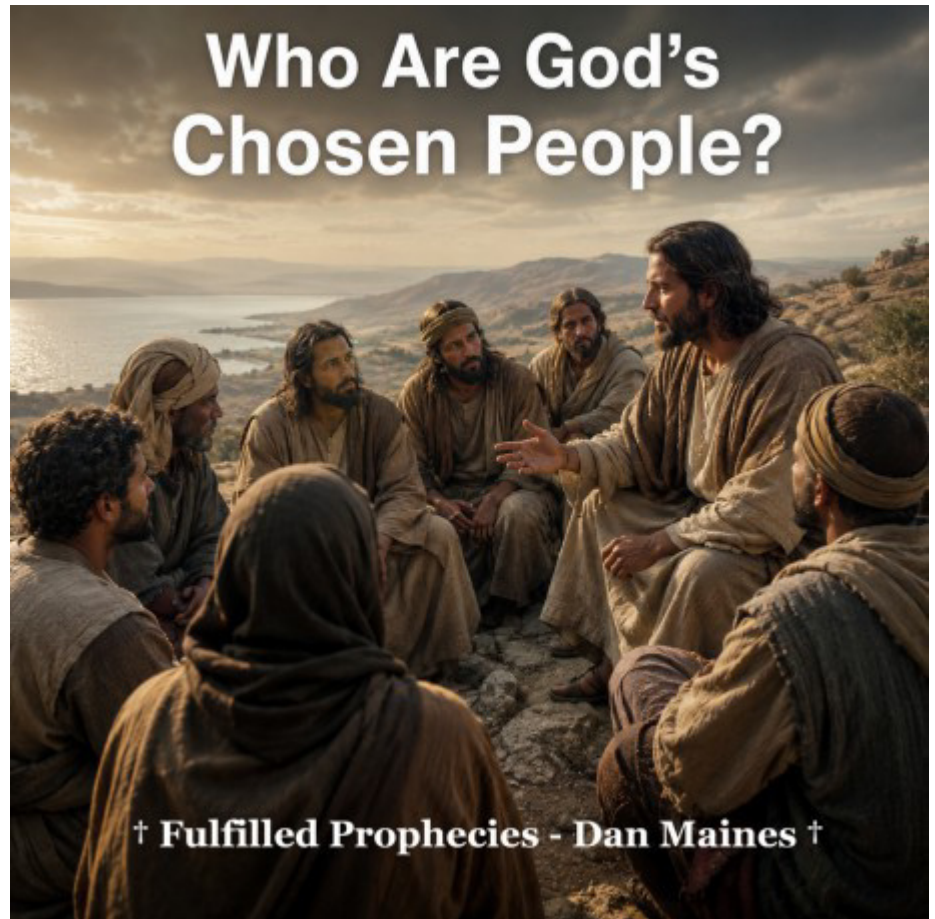


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Who Are God's Chosen People?



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† One of the most misunderstood subjects in the Bible is the identity of God's chosen people. Many assume God's chosen people are defined by physical ancestry, but the New Testament reveals that God's elect are identified by faith in Christ, not by the flesh. God's promises were never based on ethnicity alone, but on His covenant purposes fulfilled in Christ. Under the New Covenant, all who are in Christ are God's chosen people

regardless of nationality.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram,
"Go from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you into a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing;
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."

† God's covenant with Abraham always looked beyond one physical nation to the blessing of all families of the earth. The promise was worldwide from the very beginning. (Galatians 3:8)

† Israel was chosen to bring the Messiah into the world through whom the promise would reach every nation. The physical nation served God's redemptive purpose until Christ fulfilled the covenant. (Romans 9:4-5)

† God's plan was never limited to one ethnic group forever. The promise pointed to Christ and everyone who would belong to Him by faith. (Galatians 3:16)

Romans 2:28-29

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.

† Paul completely shifts the definition of God's covenant people from outward ancestry to an inward work of God.

† Physical descent no longer defines God's people under the New Covenant. A transformed heart does. (Deuteronomy 30:6; Philippians 3:3)† This fulfilled what the prophets anticipated, that God would create a people whose hearts belonged to Him. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27)

John 1:11-13

He came to His own, and His own people did not accept Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.

† John makes it clear that becoming one of God's children is not determined by physical descent, human effort, or family lineage, but by being born of God through faith in Christ. (John 3:3-8)

† Those who receive Christ become God's children regardless of their earthly ancestry. This fulfilled God's purpose of creating a people defined by faith instead of ethnicity. (Galatians 3:26-29)

† God's chosen people are identified by the new birth, not by natural birth. Under the New Covenant, faith in Christ is what distinguishes His covenant people. (1 Peter 1:23)

Galatians 3:26-29

For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ,

then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

† Paul removes every ethnic distinction regarding covenant inheritance because all believers are one in Christ.

† Abraham's true descendants are those who belong to Christ, not merely those descended through natural birth.

† Every believer inherits the promises because Christ fulfilled the covenant and shares that inheritance with His people.

(Ephesians 3:6)

Romans 9:6-8

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but:

"THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE NAMED." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

† Paul plainly states that not everyone descended from Israel belongs to the true Israel. God's covenant people have always been identified by His promise rather than by physical ancestry.

(Romans 2:28-29)

† Being born into Abraham's physical family never guaranteed covenant inheritance. God's promises were fulfilled through the promised Seed, Jesus Christ, and all who belong to Him.

(Galatians 3:16, 29)

† This passage removes any doubt that God's chosen people are defined by God's calling and promise, not by ethnic lineage. Under the New Covenant, everyone who is in Christ is counted among God's covenant people. (Ephesians 2:11-22; Philippians

3:3)

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

† Peter applies titles once given to Israel directly to believers in Christ.

† The church is described as the holy nation because God's covenant people are now defined by their relationship with Christ rather than by national identity. (Exodus 19:5-6)

† Both believing Jews and believing Gentiles together make up God's chosen people under the New Covenant. (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Matthew 21:43

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit.

† Jesus declared that covenant privilege would be taken from unbelieving Israel and given to a people who would produce its fruit. This was fulfilled in the establishment of the New Covenant community. (Matthew 8:11-12)

† The "holy nation" Peter describes is this new covenant people made up of all who believe in Christ. National Israel no longer held exclusive covenant status. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

† God's kingdom is no longer identified with one earthly nation

but with His people gathered from every nation through the gospel. (Revelation 5:9-10)

Ephesians 2:14-16

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, in this way establishing peace; and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility.

† Christ did not preserve two separate covenant peoples. He created one new humanity in Himself.

† The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile ended through the cross, fulfilling God's eternal purpose.

† God's chosen people today are all who are united to Christ through faith, regardless of earthly ancestry. (Colossians 3:11)

Romans 11:17-18

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

† Paul pictures God's covenant people as one olive tree, not two separate peoples. Believing Gentiles were grafted into the existing covenant promises through Christ.

† Unbelieving Jews were broken off because of unbelief, while believing Jews and Gentiles remained together as one people

of God. (Romans 11:20-23)

† The olive tree illustrates continuity in God's redemptive plan while showing that faith, not ethnicity, determines who remains among His covenant people. (Galatians 3:28-29)

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† The Old Covenant that distinguished Israel as a covenant nation was passing away as Hebrews was written and completely vanished with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70.

† With the Old Covenant fulfilled and removed, God's people are now identified solely through the New Covenant established by Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:14-16)

† The New Covenant does not recognize covenant standing based on physical ancestry, but upon faith in the finished work of Christ. (Galatians 3:26-29)

Historical References

† Justin Martyr wrote that those who believe in Christ are the true spiritual Israel and heirs of the promises made to Abraham.

† Irenaeus taught that Christ gathered believing Jews and Gentiles into one people under the New Covenant.

† Eusebius recorded that the church became the continuation of God's covenant people after the judgment upon Jerusalem in AD 70.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't place our confidence in race, nationality, or genealogy, but in Christ alone.

† Every believer stands equally before God because salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

† We rejoice that God's covenant promises have been fulfilled in Christ and extended to people from every nation.

† Our identity is found in belonging to Christ, who has made us fellow heirs of the promises given to Abraham.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Who are God's chosen people today?

A: Everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ by faith. In Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile because all believers are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:14-16)

Q: Does the New Testament still define God's people by physical ancestry?

A: No. The New Testament teaches that God's covenant people are identified by faith and the circumcision of the heart, not by physical descent. (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3)

Q: Did God reject His promises to Abraham?

A: No. God fulfilled His promises through Jesus Christ, and everyone who belongs to Christ shares in those promises. (Galatians 3:16, 29; Romans 15:8-9)

Q: Does this mean believing Jews have no place in God's people?

A: Believing Jews absolutely have a place, but they come to God the same way as believing Gentiles, through faith in Jesus Christ. Together they form one new man in Christ. (Ephesians 2:14-16; Romans 10:12-13)

Q: What does it mean that God chose us before the foundation of the world?

A: Paul is speaking about God's eternal plan in Christ, not the arbitrary selection of certain individuals apart from faith. Before the world began, God purposed that all who would be in Christ would be holy and blameless before Him. The focus is on God's predetermined plan of salvation through Christ and the people who are united to Him. (Ephesians 1:3-5; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:20)

Q: If God knew us before we were in our mother's womb, does that mean He individually chose who would be saved?

A: No. Passages like Jeremiah 1:5 speak of God's foreknowledge and calling of specific individuals for particular purposes, not of God choosing every individual for salvation before birth. God certainly knows every person, but the New Testament teaches that His chosen people are those who are in Christ through faith. (Jeremiah 1:5; Romans 8:29-30; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 1:4)

Q: Why are God's people called "the chosen"?

A: God's people are called "the chosen" because God chose His plan of redemption through Jesus Christ and chose that all who are in His Son would receive the blessings of the New Covenant. They are chosen for a purpose, to belong to Christ, proclaim His excellencies, and reflect His holiness. God's choosing is centered in Christ, and everyone who believes in Him shares in that calling. (Ephesians 1:3-5; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Romans 8:28-30; Colossians 3:12)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Genesis 12:1-3; Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 2:14-16

† Justin Martyr; Irenaeus; Eusebius

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