

Election: Does God choose who would receive salvation?

When God makes His covenant with Abraham, He commits Himself to be God to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:7). God's covenant with Abraham occurred after Abraham demonstrated his faith in God, and God knew that Abraham would teach his household the way of the Lord to do what is right and just (Gen 18:19). Abraham had to teach "so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen 18:19).

After leading the nation of Israel out of Egypt, God uses Moses to teach the way of the Lord. Just before introducing the Law of Moses, God tells the nation what faith means:

You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites. (Ex 19:4-6, NIV)

1. After revealing the conditional Law, Moses states the significance of God's choice of the nation of Israel, what does he demand the nation do? Carefully observe the text and explain your observation.

To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. (Deut 10:14-17, NIV)

2. As the nation of Israel repeatedly fails to keep their covenant promises, they ultimately and irrevocably break the Mosaic Covenant, and are expelled from the Promised Land. What do you observe of God's explanation for making the New Covenant? What does it reveal about "God's people" who were supposed to keep their covenant promises?

Therefore say to the Israelites, "is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. (Ezek 36:22-25)

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Teacher Notes

When God makes His covenant with Abraham, He commits Himself to be God to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:7). God's covenant with Abraham occurred after Abraham demonstrated his faith in God, and God knew that Abraham would teach his household the way of the Lord to do what is right and just (Gen 18:19). Abraham had to teach "so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen 18:19).

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Review God's objective definition of faith with the student:

"You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt" – While God is invisible, the Exodus demonstrates that He is alive and real.

"If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession" – Just as God is as real as your parents, place your trust in God's words and obey.

Faith is 1) a belief that God is real and alive, and 2) place a trust in His words and obey.

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Ask the student: what is the Law of Moses?

The Law of Moses was a condition covenant with the children of Israel that taught them the way of the Lord – how to be a people of God by learning what sin is and how to atone for it.

Ask the student: what impact does this have on God's choice of Israel?

Moses tells the nation to "circumcise your hearts," because it is the only way to be God's choice people. There is no other way to be with the great and awesome God for He is impartial and does not accept any bribe.

If God is to be God to Abraham's descendants, His own possession among all the peoples, then the children of Israel must be a sanctified people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Ex 19:4-6).

2. As the nation of Israel repeatedly fails to keep their covenant promises, they ultimately and irrevocably break the Mosaic Covenant, and are expelled from the Promised Land. What do you observe of God's explanation for making the New Covenant? What does it reveal about "God's people" who were supposed to keep their covenant promises?

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Ask the student: what is the New Covenant?

With the unconditional New Covenant, God forgives the descendant of Abraham of all sin – past, present, and future. In contrast, the Mosaic Covenant forgave the Old Testament Believer's past sin.

The New Covenant regenerates and bestows something within the descendant of Abraham: the Holy Spirit. God's law will be "written" on their heart.

The descendant of Abraham will be blessed with a secure nation and a bountiful land. This promise, historically impossible today, is a reference to the future.

Ask the student: if the nation of Israel broke the Mosaic Covenant, why did He make a new one?

When God made the covenant with Abraham to be his God, it was part of a greater plan to restore the created image of God. While the nation of Israel failed in their Old Covenant promises to be a sanctified people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, God does not abandon His promise to Abraham to be God to the descendants of Abraham.

Jesus mediates the New Covenant and His name means "Yahweh is Salvation." This is how God demonstrates "the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes."

Ask the student: how can you be a descendant of Abraham – God's choice people? Consider John 3:16-17:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17, NIV)

Through the New Covenant, mediated through His Son Jesus (Yaweh is Salvation), God's choice of being God to the descendant of Abraham is being fulfilled. The immensity that the living God who exists, YHWH - I AM WHO I AM, has chosen to be our personal God cannot be taken for granted or understated. But the choice is yours whether you want to be of God's possession among all the peoples of the earth or not (Ex 19:4-5; 1 Pet 2:9).