

What About God's Chosen People? Part XIX



By Philip E. Busby

Question #21 - *“Is it true that the Jews are God's chosen people? I have a Christian friend who says the Jews were not God's chosen people.”*

In our last segment, we stepped aside from moving directly forward in our historical look and took a broader look going all the way back to the time of the Judges and forward to the time of Christ. We did this in order to talk more deeply about the consequences of the Jew's decision to establish the Maccabees as the high priests and rulers until a faithful prophet should arise. Hopefully, this gave us a better understanding on the point of how much this might have been a good decision at the time; but with that said, there is the truth that even good choices can lead to bad consequences, especially if the intent of the choices is not followed. For awhile now we have been hitting on the larger subject of the religion of Judaism, and these historical accounts of the nation show us how the pieces fit together. What we see is that a religious mindset became more and more established in the nation. Why? Because there was an ever growing fear that the nation as a people would lose their identity if they did not hold tight to the Words God had used to establish them.

This kind of fear in and of itself can be a good thing, but only if it drives us (and by “us” I'm talking even in more general terms across all true believers both Jew and non-Jew) to seek God Himself and the deeper reasons

He gave the Law. Even for the non-Jew there is great value in understanding the letter of the Law, which is something so misunderstood among Christians today and for many centuries now. However, if the letter of the Law becomes our god then we have a problem no matter who we are. That is really where this entire argument about God rejecting the Jews as His people comes down to. People misunderstand this very point. They look at the ways in which the Jews established a religion and how that religion caused them to react the way they did toward The Messiah, and from this they conclude there is no way God could continue to use such a people. What we do not see through all of it is that this is being human. Christians are no better, and the proof of that is something I write on quite often, not as an indictment of Christians but as a warning!

It is a human thing to get caught up on religion and forget to follow God directly! I know many would say I'm being way to light on the subject, but the simple truth is, that is all the Jews are guilty of. We are all so arrogant to believe we would do so much better as Christians; and again, I believe there is plenty of proof that shows we would not and have not. I don't say any of this to simply bounce back and forth between blaming Jews for being wrong and then accuse Christians of being wrong, as this is exactly what leads so many people to debate back and forth as to whether they should be more Jewish - as in follow the Jewish ritual laws and the like, or to reject all things “Jewish,” even to the point of rejecting the very study of the Law. One day we think the Law is of no effect; the next, we believe it is very important and we are not living right because we are not following it. What we should see is that we are individuals. Individuals are born into different circumstances, and in the end it won't matter what people/nation we are born into, only that we served God in the way He expected us to as the individual we each are.

If you are a Jew, this means the Laws, in action, are for you. However, how much of that Law can be followed on the basis of how much of it is impossible to is not in your hands alone, because the full representational Law cannot be enacted without a nation, on its land, with the temple, and the priesthood in full operation. As a non-Jew, the representational Law is for observance and study but not enacting. How much of the dietary laws and the like you choose to follow is strictly between you and God, or is a personal choice on the understanding God's Law is, of course, based in how He established the world to work. For example, the dietary laws do not return us to the the true fruits and vegetables only diet given to Adam and Eve. (Gen. 1:29) However, they are a fantastic guide to get us away from the just eat everything you want diet (which is the unhealthy lifestyle

of many eating patterns), while taking into account the fact it is not always possible to eat just what Adam and Eve's diet would require us to restrict ourselves to. Sin has destroyed our world, and this is why God Himself told Noah people could begin to use animal products and eat animal meat after the flood. (Gen. 9:1-7)

Now, in truth, even the Kosher diet of the Jews is not always an easy one to follow, depending on what there is available to eat in one's location and considering one's financial circumstances. This becomes even more true when we see the religious interpretation of the Kosher diet that is imposed on many Jews by the more Orthodox thinking. This is not to scold any Jews or those who teach the Law among them, because it, again, is up to them to interpret, but it does make the point that I started out making, which is - individuals must work out their own salvation in fear and trembling. (Phili. 2:12-13) What we fail to see is, this is not to be a fear of man's religious establishment and its demands, but of God Himself! If we believe following any group, person, etc. is what puts us in the right, we couldn't be more wrong! I made the statement in our last segment that even when we do wrong things that we will not be held accountable for because we did not understand they were wrong, those actions still have negative consequences. Well, the opposite is also true in that doing right always has positive consequences. However, just as we are not held accountable for doing wrong when we don't know we're wrong, doing right for the wrong reasons is something God sees as well!

This is precisely why I keep reminding people, especially Christians who have been exposed to years of being taught the Golden Rule is to love others as yourself, that the actual Golden Rule is to love God with everything you have and are! All our physical actions could be righteous, but if we are doing them because someone told us to and not out of a love and respect for The God Who created us, then we are not following God. In these cases, we are only following our own righteous set of rules no matter how truly righteous or unrighteous our rules are. This may make the world a "better place," but it will not help us stand before God, because all have sinned and fallen short of God's perfection! (Rom. 3:21-31) The point is simple, it is up to us as individuals to do what is right and to do it for the right reasons. We need to keep in mind that there are plenty of people who seek to be good people, but that doesn't mean they want to have anything to do with God. There are also plenty of people who say they want to serve God but fall into the belief that being a good person for the sake of being a good person is the way to do that. Both are wrong!

In many ways, this is what leads to religion, and

our churches are full of those from both groups. There are those who use church as a place to learn how to be a good person and/or simply find it a place of encouragement to continue being a better person and/or that it keeps them on track in being so. Both groups can use church for this reason. The first group does so without care for the eternal, and the second does so with legalistic thoughts about how to make it to heaven. The fact so few have a true focus on even wanting to do good because a relationship with God leads us to do so, in causing us to strive to learn right for the very purpose of gaining a closer relationship with God, is why our churches can be very legalistic yet very liberal. People tend to think legalism is just about being strict, but that is not the case. Legalism is what I have been talking about, doing what you do, whether white, black, or any shade of gray in-between, for the wrong purpose.

The reason we end up with so many liberal churches is because legalism does not dictate we be righteous. It only dictates that we follow rules, traditions, and the like. You can do this because you believe it is what makes you a good person for the sake of being a good person, or you can do it in an attempt to get into heaven, but the real problem is that it becomes a group decision or the decision of a leader(s) that dictates what the rules are. Even in the case of a leader, or small group of leaders, making the decisions, it is still a group decision because we all have a free will to follow our own thoughts. In truth, we are following our own thoughts regardless of if those thoughts are something we want to formulate based on what we believe, using our own reasoning, or thoughts about just wanting an easy way of not having to think so much for ourselves. In either case, if we believe there is safety in numbers, there is not! As to the point of being strict or liberal, both will cause us to reject God because He is not the motivation behind what we do. Those who are strict will often find fault in God's judgments, especially in the ways He shows mercy to the sinner, because it does not conform to our religious thought pattern of what is necessary. This is what we see the Jewish religious establishment doing to Jesus as He was often accused of being too willing to be among the sinners. Thus, we see this side greatly exemplified in the Gospels and use it as the definition of legalism. However, the liberal side will also reject God because as God attempts to bring us into righteousness and correct our wrong, we get upset that such ways are just being overbearing, restrictive, and we don't think it's necessary, especially with the way we interpret Jesus' actions which drew criticism from the very rigid Jewish religious leaders.

I must continually go back to the point this study is about, which is, have the Jews been rejected as God's

people? The answer is no, and the most simplistic explanation as to how we know this is because a group of any size is always going to end up on the wrong side of things eventually. This is what the Bible shows us, and why the very first instructions God gave to man was not to take on the responsibility of good and evil for ourselves because in the day we did it would bring death. (Gen. 2:15-17) Man believes he can build a utopia in some way, but Revelation ends by showing us the total destruction and passing away of this earth and universe. So I repeat, any group of people, no matter how good a person the group might start out from, such as Abraham, or how good the initial group is led by a man of God, such as Moses, will eventually go bad. Why? Because an individual can be lifted from the miry clay, but as a whole, men are on a path of destruction. (Ps. 40:1-3, Prov. 14:12) God knew all this when He established the nation of Israel, and only if we believe God is a God Who sets us up for failure, should we fail to see how God set up the nation to serve a purpose in spite of this truth! The very core of the argument for why people believe the Jews have been rejected is because God has punished them as a nation. However, because of what we just covered, it should be clear to us God's interaction to correct the nation, and in many cases even restrict them from doing what He wanted and still wants them to do, was/is a forgone conclusion of something that would be necessary in order to maintain a chosen nation from the very start.

When we look at how the nation, and in particular the religious leadership, ended up treating The Messiah, we should not see a nation that went too far to be saved from their mistake. God gave His life willingly for the very purpose of saving us all! If this was not true, The Father would not have allowed The Son to endure the cross. What the Jews show us is our human nature, which demands we each have God's continual intervention and correction in our lives, and no greater example of that exists than when the chosen nation's religious leadership crucified The Messiah! Instead of fighting over the argument of saying the Jews are no longer God's people, we should continue to look to them to see the lessons we can learn from. We should understand that allowing the Jews to crucify The Messiah was not a course God took because it would lead to their rejection, but because it would lead to the ultimate salvation of all who seek the truth, both Jews and non-Jews. In a move only God could accomplish, He allowed people to do something for all the wrong reasons that held eternal positive consequences!

In this, we have the glaring light of where our human mistakes take us, but how God ultimately used it to bring about our ultimate salvation! Instead of seeing this, what calls itself the church attempts to judge the Jews

for why they did what they did, all the while demanding Christians become a microcosm, if not a bigger monster, of what the Jewish religious establishment became. It's just astonishing how even in doing such a foolish thing, we are arrogant enough to believe and teach that our choice to create a group can replace and do better than the one God Himself established and clearly defined the leadership of. We go off and create a group(s) and/or religion we depend on above our personal walk with God, which is made after our own thoughts! How could this not be a formula for our destruction? Groups, as a group, do not make it to heaven. Only individuals will ever accomplish that through their individual faith in God. Groups can be good at times and even make the best choices that can be made at the moment for maintaining the group, but whether they go up or down from there is all up to whether the right wins out over the wrong during any stretch of time, and what we judge the chosen nation on shows us the answer to what wins over and over.

Don't we ever wonder why the part of Jewish history we are covering in this study right now is not included in the official cannon of scripture? While some accept certain books as being scripture, which do cover some of these events between the Testaments, this, in spite of the powerful organizations which do so, is not the consensus. Jews certainly do not hold the books outside what most of us know as the Old Testament as scripture, and a vast amount of those who call themselves Christians do not care about them. Why would they? Books covering the history between the Testaments are not of any great value to most Christians because they have a hard enough time believing there is a lot of value in the Old Testament, especially compared to the New. However, do you ever wonder why so little about church history is covered even in the New? Both the question of why the information between the Testaments is not canonized, as well as why it was/is not important to record any more of the history of the church following Christ are answered by the point that we have seen it repeated time and again. Daniel sought to see the end because even in his time he had seen enough to know there would obviously be one! Thus, the New Testament finishes with a fulfillment of Daniel's request to see the end in more detail by God giving the Revelation to John.

This brings us back to the historical point of what the Jews chose in 141 B.C. The choice to establish a family to be leaders until a faithful prophet arose was just another in a long series of events that confirm to us what the stories contained in the Old Testament showed us was going to happen. The Jews choice at this time was one meant to put the nation's foot on a path of reform. This is why I say, it was a good one at the time, but what went

wrong after that is the faithful prophet was not sought for day and night by both the new leadership and the people. Because this was true, the new leadership would eventually grow into an establishment who could not stand the thought of giving up the power it had gained to step aside for the faithful prophet or The Messiah Himself when they came! In looking at what calls itself the church today, I am confident this is the same exact problem many who claim to be Christians will have when Jesus returns to take the reins of this earth. What calls itself the church very closely mirrors this time in the Jewish history, in that long ago it established itself as a group with one of its main purposes being to wait for the return of Christ! As we draw closer to the end, this becomes more and more like the state the Jews were in when determining they did not know when or how God would set it all straight for the nation, but they would look for God's faithful prophet and establish an authority to continue the nation until such time.

The major difference between what calls itself the church and the chosen nation is that the chosen nation had a calling as a group and a template in the Law for what they were suppose to look like. The church, as an organization, has no such template. This is precisely why Catholicism made up a story, which is not in nor supported by scripture, that tells us there was/is a line of succession from Jesus passed to Peter and so on through the centuries which carries the authority of The Messiah. This line or position has for a very long time now simply been known as the "Pope." Unlike both the High Priest's or the King's position in Israel, there is no heritage or dynasty to determine who the rightful person for this job is. There are no set rules, other than those conveniently made by man, as to who this person should be. Why? Because nowhere during or after the time of Christ do we have God giving us a new Torah! Jesus made it clear He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. (Matt. 5:17) If His point was to fulfill it, then the Law does not become irrelevant as so many claiming to be Christians foolishly try to argue, it makes it more important than ever that we understand It!

Another point I have often made in the studies I write is, what a misleading thing it is that we refer to the two major separations of the Bible as the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is to say there is an old covenant and a new covenant. In truth, there is the original Hebrew Bible, which while its arrangement is not exactly what Christians call the Old Testament, for all intense and purposes that's what the Old Testament is; and then there are the Gospels, which show us what the Law was established to point us to all this time. We can't understand that the Gospels have any relevance higher

than any other religious philosophy in the world, without the original Law! The existence of this heaven and earth had a beginning, then a middle, and there will be an end. We certainly are not at the beginning! The Hebrew Bible makes that clear, but we are also not at the end. How do we know this? Well, just look around! This heaven and earth are still in existence; people are still being born; and Judgment Day is still in front of us. So where are we? Without the Law we cannot even begin to answer that question! Without the understanding It brings, we do not know at what point in the time between the beginning and the end we are at.

The Gospels are not the new Torah or anything of the like! The Gospels are just what the word means. They are the good news that all we read and learn about through study of the Hebrew Bible is true, and The Messiah has come! As we look at the Epistles, we need to understand the book of Acts is actually part of the Gospel of Luke. Those who put the cannon of the New Testament together simply found it convenient to separate Acts and put it after what they saw as the neat package of having four Gospels which all covered about the same time period. Thus, the true teaching of those originally and directly called by Jesus to take forth the good news (this includes Paul as the true replacement of Judas as part of the twelve, which I will not take time to go in depth into right now), along with a few words from early preachers who saw the pitfalls the church was already headed for, are encapsulated in the Epistles. These teachings were preserved for us so we might have help in seeing Jesus truly was The Messiah according to what the Hebrew Bible had shown, and this is why twelve Jewish men, not non-Jews, were called to be Jesus' apostles. These books also deal with a great amount of the bickering that took place as to whether non-Jews should have to enact and/or follow and/or become Jews in order to be saved, and the answer is no!

Beyond these books we get one last revelation which, as I said, is the fulfillment of what Daniel had asked for. When Daniel was seeing the vision he had so diligently sought for, there came a point where God told him, in spite of the fact he was worthy, Daniel had seen enough for the time being. This is why the rest of what Daniel wished to see would be shown to John, and give us a much more detailed look at the events that the end of Daniel's vision only skimmed over at best. In this fact alone we should see how much the New Testament is not a new Torah, which for the sake of this study is to point out that it in no way was intended to establish a new thing! Where we so often get tripped up is on the point that, of course, the fulfillment of many things in the Law and prophets meant a whole new understanding and viewpoint

for those who live on this side of Christ. The new covenant Jesus spoke of was only in the fact that the generation living from there to the point of Christ's return would live being able to pair up much of what the Law had shown only in representation, directly with what now we see as historical facts!

The new covenant did not establish a new organization or group to take the place of the chosen nation. The new covenant did not destroy the chosen nation, dismantle it, hand its responsibilities to others, etc. The new covenant is what the chosen nation had been looking for not just in those who understood how the Law told them The Messiah would come, but even in this determination made at the time of the Maccabees that the nation would look for a faithful prophet to arise. The fact the nation did not accept the faithful prophet or The Messiah in a way that allowed them to get their nation back on track, only means the Jews, as a nation, were left in much the same place they had been in for a little over a century before Jesus came. They now have to wait until the return of The Messiah, which is something Christians hold dear but disconnect from the truth that the idea of waiting for The Messiah is not a Christian thing, it is a Jewish thing!

Now, before everyone goes all crazy on me over that last statement, stop to think about what might make you think badly about such a statement. It has to do with the very attitude we've been talking about when saying the Jewish religion and man's thirst for power is what caused the rejection of The Messiah the first time around. In many ways, the desire on the part of what calls itself the church to reject the chosen nation and insist they have been displaced by the church is the same attitude that killed The Messiah. Sure, there are those who will make the argument they are only upset with the Jews for pushing their religion, which does not recognize Jesus as being The Messiah, and in doing so hurting the message of the Gospel. However, this has been true from the very start. The apostles, who were Jews, did not go out and for the most part get persecuted by the non-Jewish world, though there would be plenty of that. The greatest and most immediate battle faced was between Jews who did and Jews who did not accept Jesus as The Messiah. The fact the religion claimed by a majority of Jews today is still on the side of rejecting Jesus does not change anything from where it all started. The only real difference is that the church which holds Jesus was/is The Messiah, in no small part due to religion, consists of far more non-Jews than it does Jews.

However, on that point we should consider something simple, which is the fact this was always going

to be the case if the chosen nation had any success at any point when it came to presenting The God of creation to the world. How blind as Christians do we have to be not to understand, the Jews are only one nation? It is beyond foolish to believe Jews can not be saved. Thus, the only logic to even debating about if the church has replaced the Jews or if the Jews have been "rejected" is to hold fast to a false belief such as saying, the only path to salvation before Jesus came and after the Law was established was that one had to become part of the Jewish nation. If that was true, then God's plan in giving the Law in order to establish a chosen nation failed miserably from the very start! Due to the fact you will find in the Law far more ways to be cut off from being considered part of the nation than you will ways to become a part of it, it is as if you're arguing God originally set up a plan that made it very hard to be saved. A plan that almost barred the door closed not opened it up!

Is this the kind of God you believe we serve? If your answer is yes, then you must believe we serve a God who changed somewhere between the Old and New Testament, and that makes you a Gnostic Christian for all intents and purposes, as well as one who rejects the scripture, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Hebrews 13:8 Because it sure seems to me that to most Christians the ease of receiving salvation on this side of the cross is what they interpret as the "good news." Now, if your answer is no, then one should have always understood true believers in God who were outside the chosen nation would almost always have outnumbered those who were part of it, so nothing has really changed. These are all points I think those who claim to be Christians must stop to deeply consider, especially in light of the fact we grow ever closer to being the generation that will live to see the Second Coming of The Messiah we claim to be waiting for!

Until next time, may we each continually choose to be the people God wants us to be!

