

Chosen in Christ

God is a Sovereign God and He is a God of purpose and order. Before God ever created this world and the people in it He had a plan for what He was about to create. In God's eternal plan He would have a people for His name, a people set apart unto Himself. The questions that we now ponder are, first, How shall this people be determined and second, how shall God bring His plan to fruition? Who shall make up this people of God and how shall that be determined?

This brings us to consider the doctrine of Election, God's sovereign choice of those who shall make up a people for His name. The subject of election has long raised questions in people's minds as they have wrestled with this issue and the theological arguments that have grown up around it. Whole systems of Theology have been developed among Christians around this one central issue. The debate between Calvinism and Arminianism has often been heated as one has emphasized the sovereignty of God and the other the free will of man. Both sides have used the Scriptures to support their arguments and many have been left somewhat confused by it all.

In the Scripture there are statements about God's sovereign elective choice and there are also statements that say "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9); and "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Is God willing for all to be saved or has He chosen some to be saved and some to be lost? How are we to understand this doctrine of election?

As we begin this brief study I would not presume to answer all of the theological questions that have been raised, but I would like to simply go to the Scripture and seek to gain some understanding of what God's Word says about this subject. Our desire is to approach the Scripture without superimposing some theological system upon what is said. We would also like to consider this concept as it is found in both Old and New Testaments. God's Word is always consistent with itself and it is important that we build upon what is taught in both Testaments. God's revelation in the Old Testament is intended to lay the foundation for what is taught in the New Testament. In 1Corinthians 10:11 we discover that what is recorded in the Old Testament has application for us in the present. "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." Since these Old Testament concepts form the foundation for New Testament truth it is important that we examine this concept in the Old Testament.

I. The Focus of the Old Testament on Election

The concept of a "Chosen People" occupies a significant place in the Old Testament Scriptures. The people of Israel are referred to as "God's Chosen People". They were blessed of God and in a position where God speaks of them as His people. As we look at what is taught in the Old Testament there are several things to consider.

Choosing of the Patriarchs

We begin with Genesis 12:1-3 as God chose Abraham and set him apart unto Himself to make of him a people for His name. "Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

As we look at this passage we learn the following:

1. It is Unconditional - God chose Abraham, It was His sovereign choice, without conditions. God spoke to Abraham and told him what He would do for him.
2. It came with the promise of great Blessing - God's elective choice came with the commitment to bless those who are chosen. To be chosen of God places a person in a position of being the recipient of God's blessing.
3. It included Abraham's Seed with him - God's choice was never limited to Abraham alone. In fact part of the blessing was to make of him a great nation and to bring that people under the blessing of God, into "chosen" status.
4. It had far reaching results - God's plan was to bring blessing to all families of the earth. It was never limited to Abraham or to his family, Israel. God promised to bless all families of the earth through Abraham.

In Genesis 15:1-5 God reaffirms these promises assuring him that his seed would be in this choice. "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

In verse 18 of that same chapter God declared that these promises were now in the form of a covenant with Abraham. "On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates". Looking at this passage you will again see God acting sovereignly and unilaterally. In fact God placed Abraham in a "deep sleep" as the promises of this covenant were made, thus making it impossible for Abraham to do something or to add to this covenant. Abraham's response to God's promises was simply to believe what God said. This is seen in verse 6 of this same chapter where we read "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." Faith is here established as the only acceptable response to God's gracious provision. The Apostle Paul refers to this in Romans 4:1-3, "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness".

It is God's gracious choice and note that there is an emphasis on Abraham's "seed" (verse 18). As we trace the story of the patriarchs through Genesis we follow this trail of the "chosen seed". Abraham had a son, Ishmael, by the servant girl Hagar, but God made clear in Genesis 17:19 that His choice was in Isaac. "Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his descendants after him".

God then reaffirmed that choice to Isaac himself in Genesis 26:2-4. "Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;" Since Isaac also had two sons, twins,

God again made a sovereign choice in which Jacob was the one who would be the father of the “chosen seed” and upon whom God’s blessing would come.

God made His choice known to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15. “And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.” Having chosen Jacob, God changed his name to Israel (prince with God) (Genesis 32:28) and included all 12 of his sons as His “chosen seed”.

Throughout the Old Testament we discover that God is often referred to as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” recognizing that being “God’s Chosen People” is because they are descendants of those to whom God had made a covenant. They were blessed of God because they were “in Abraham”. In Deuteronomy 7:6-8 it is clear that Israel is blessed by God because they are in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. “For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD YOUR God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

The concept of election in the Old Testament is that those who are in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are God’s chosen people. There is no indication that it was God choosing each individual to be His Chosen. He chose Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and those who were truly in these patriarchs.

With that it is also important to note that there is a distinction made between those who are true children of Abraham and those who were just physical descendants. Those who were true children of Abraham were those who believed God, people of faith. When Israel turned away from God they came under God’s judgment but even in those times the Scripture record tells us that there was a remnant that believed. Isaiah often speaks of this remnant as in Isaiah 1:9 where we read, “Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah.” This remnant is recognized as the true seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We also note that in the Old Testament we find Gentiles who believed and came under the blessing that God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Rahab, the harlot in Jericho was one who believed God and came under His blessing. Ruth, the Moabite, is also an example as is Naaman, the Syrian. To be “God’s Chosen People” was to be under His blessing because of a relationship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a true descendant. It should be noted that God not only included Rahab and Ruth in God’s “Chosen People” but we also find that they are both listed in the lineage of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:5; “Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse”.

Jesus made it clear in John 8:37-44 that there is a distinction between those who are true descendants of Abraham and those who are just physical descendants as He reasoned with the religious leaders of Israel. The leaders claimed to be the sons of Abraham but note what Jesus

said. "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it."

These men were physical descendants but they were not true sons of Abraham because they did not believe what God was saying about His Son. Paul also spoke about this distinction in 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 that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is not* from men but from God." We find this distinction again in Romans 9:31-33, "but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because *they did not seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

When we put this all together we must conclude that the Old Testament concept of election is that God has chosen Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be the recipients of His blessing and their "seed" are included with them. Israel is the "Chosen People of God" because they are in Abraham. We also learn that it is not just physical descendants of Abraham that share this blessing but it is those who, like Abraham, believe God. Paul again makes this point in Romans 4:1-5, "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,"

II. What the New Testament Teaches

As we come to the New Testament we discover that there is a link with what was taught in the Old Testament about God's Chosen People. Some views of election seem to ignore this link and make election to speak of how God chooses individuals to be His chosen ones. While election in the Old Testament was in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob it is not presented as a matter of God' choosing certain individuals.

What we find in the New Testament is a definite link with what was taught in the Old Testament. God's promises to Abraham are now fulfilled in Jesus Christ and He is the seed of Abraham. The New Testament begins as Matthew 1:1 declares Jesus to be the "son of Abraham"; "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham". In Galatians 3:16 Jesus Christ is referred to as the promised seed of Abraham, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ." We will consider this passage in Galatians in its context later but for now it is clear that Christ Jesus is the seed of Abraham.

All that God was teaching us through Israel about “His Chosen” is now brought to completion in the Lord Jesus. He is God’s Chosen One. Peter makes that clear in 1 Peter 2:4 as he says, “He is chosen of God and precious”. The term “Christ” means “Anointed One” and carries with it this idea of chosen. You can see this designation in Luke 23:35, “And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”

A careful study of both Old and New Testaments will reveal this link as we compare what is said about God’s Chosen. The terms that are used in the Old Testament of God’s Chosen are now used of Jesus Christ. He is so designated as God’s Chosen One. Consider the following:

A. My Son - Israel is designated as “My Son” in the Old Testament but the New Testament presents Jesus as the true Son of God. In Psalm 2:7, 8 God says “You are My Son”. This passage is applied to Jesus Christ in Acts 13:33 and again in Hebrews 1:5; 5:5. On a couple of occasions God audibly spoke from heaven to testify to His Sonship (Matthew 3:16, 17; 17:5).

B. My Servant - The passage in Isaiah 42:1 is clearly speaking about the Messiah and is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This passage is quoted in Matthew 12:17-21 to identify Jesus as God’s Servant.

C. Thy Holy One - The passage from Psalm 16:10 is quoted in Acts 2:27 to speak of Christ’s resurrection. In these passages He is referred to as “Thy Holy One”. Note also Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30; 1 John 2:20.

D. The Seed - Paul’s argument in Galatians 3:16 not only refers to Jesus as “the Seed”, but identifies Him as the One who fulfills God’s promise to Abraham. He is Abraham’s Seed. Note that Paul makes a point about this word “seed” being in the singular rather than plural. While Israel was the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ is the true Seed of Abraham that fulfills all of God’s promises. He is the culmination of God’s elective purpose, He is God’s Chosen One.

It is interesting that few of the theological works seem to take note of these facts and they say little or nothing about Christ as the Chosen One of God when they discuss election. We must not avoid the fact that the Old Testament concept of election is clearly carried over into the New Testament and there it is linked to Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 3 Paul writes to this Gentile church to speak of their position before God now that they are followers of Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:6-9 he makes the link not only between Christ and Abraham but also with those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ. Consider the following: “Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” Therefore know that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

Paul’s argument that links New Testament believers with Abraham does not come by way of becoming a proselyte Jew. The link is with what God promised Abraham when He said that all nations would be blessed through Abraham. This blessing comes upon those who, like Abraham, believe what God says and come to Him by faith. In verses 10 through 12 of Galatians 3 Paul makes clear that these blessings do not come by keeping the law but by faith alone. He quotes from Habakkuk 2:4 to show that faith is the way that sinners can be justified before God in both Old and New Testaments.

Galatians 3:10-12 reads as follows: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." No one is ever declared righteous and therefore under God's blessing because no one can keep the law perfectly. The law can only declare a person guilty and thus under the curse. This fact then raises the question, "How does God declare a person righteous by faith?"

The answer to this question comes in Galatians 3:13-14, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree", that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ took our sin and the curse that went with our sin and on the cross He paid in full the price of our redemption. This connected with God's promise to Abraham in verse 14 as Paul writes that the "blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ".

We must not miss the significance of what Paul says here in verses 13-14. In verse 13 He speaks of the redemptive work of Christ on the cross bearing the curse of sin upon Himself. He paid the penalty in full "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles". His death was the means by which God links Gentiles to blessings that God promised to Abraham. As we noted before, Galatians 3:16 tells us that Jesus Christ is the promised seed of Abraham and thus the one who is chosen and blessed of God.

The next paragraph in this passage (Galatians 3:17-25) makes the point that the giving of the Law did not and could not annul or add to the promise given to Abraham. Rather the law was added to help Israel to understand the reality of sin and to prepare them for the coming of Messiah (Jesus Christ).

Paul concludes his argument in verses 26-29 where Gentiles and Jews are linked together in Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham. In verse 26 he says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." We stand before God as sons, under His blessing, chosen in Christ. The Holy Spirit has baptized us (placed us into) the body of Christ without distinction of any kind as listed in verse 27-28 "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on 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."

Verse 29 makes the final link for Gentiles with the blessing of Abraham and the blessing of being chosen in Christ. Galatians 3:29 says "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The issue here is "If you are Christ's." If you belong to Jesus Christ, If you are in Him by faith you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. This being true you are chosen and a recipient of God's blessing.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians emphasizes this point that believers in Christ are chosen in Him and recipients of God's blessing. In Ephesians 1:3 Paul makes the following statement; "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ," It is significant to note that as the writer speaks of the blessings that we have in Christ, he speaks of God (the source of all these blessings) as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This reminds us of how God is often addressed in the Old Testament as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Jews

recognized that they were chosen and recipients of God's blessing because they were the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God's covenant was with the fathers and came through them.

In the New Testament we discover a similar truth, Christ is the seed of Abraham and all of God's blessings come to us through Jesus Christ. The New Covenant is established in His blood and we are included because we are in Him. You will find that God is often referred to in the New Testament as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consider the following:

Romans 15:6

that you may with one mind **and** one mouth glorify the **God and Father of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**.

2 Corinthians 1:3

Blessed *be* the **God and Father of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**, the **Father of mercies and God of** all comfort,

2 Corinthians 11:31

The **God and Father of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed *be* the **God and Father of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in **Christ**,

Ephesians 1:17

that the **God of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**, the **Father of** glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom **and** revelation in the knowledge of Him,

Colossians 1:3

We give thanks to the **God and Father of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**, praying always for you,

1 Peter 1:2-3

elect according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience **and** sprinkling of the blood of **Jesus Christ**: Grace to you **and** peace be multiplied.

Blessed *be* the **God and Father of** our Lord **Jesus Christ**, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of **Jesus Christ** from the dead,

The passage in Ephesians 1 helps us to understand what it means to be "God's Chosen People." In Ephesians 1:4 we are told that believers are "chosen in Him". It does not say "chosen to be in Him" but rather "chosen in Him". What we learned about Abraham and his seed can now be applied here. As Abraham was chosen of God so Jesus Christ is now God's Chosen One. The seed of Abraham, those who were "in him", were included under the promised blessings of God's covenant with Abraham. So now, those who are, by faith, "in Christ" are recipients, with Him, of all God's promised blessing under the New Covenant.

In Ephesians 1:4-5 we discover that God made a choice before the foundation of the world. "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," Before God created He chose all those who were "in Christ" that they would stand before Him as "holy and without blame before Him in love". In verse 5 we discover that God also predetermined before creation that those who were "in Christ" would be a part of His family, adopted as sons through Jesus Christ.

Paul continues by reminding us that we are accepted into God's family not because of something in us but rather because we are in Christ.

Ephesians 1:6 makes clear that it is all to the “praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” The beloved one is God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and we are accepted before God because we are “in Him”. Later in Ephesians 5:22-33 Paul speaks of the intimate love relationship that exists between a husband and wife and then uses it to speak of the relationship of Christ and His bride (the church). Ephesians 5:32 “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” While Paul speaks of a human relationship he applies it to the relationship between Christ and His bride. He is beloved of His Father and thus those who are “in Him” by faith are accepted by the Father. In marriage a bride is accepted in her husband’s family because she is “united to Him”. This is now true with those who are united in Christ. We are accepted in the “beloved one” (Jesus Christ).

As we continue on into Ephesians 2:11-22 we discover that believing Gentiles are linked with believing Jews in a relationship with God and thus become His chosen ones. In verse 11-13 Paul reminds Gentiles that before they were “in Christ” they had no standing with God. Note the following, “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands that at that time you 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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” The point is made in these verses that unbelieving Gentiles had no connection with what made Israel a special people. In fact Gentiles are said to be without God and having no hope.

However everything changes with the words found in verse 13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” In the verses that follow (Ephesians 2:14-22) Paul speaks of how Christ has broken down the wall that existed between Jews and Gentiles and how they are both reconciled to God “in Christ”. They are now fellow-citizens in the household of God. They are together part of His Temple. You will find this passage very helpful if you carefully consider it in the following paragraph.

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

Paul follows in Ephesians 3:1-6 telling us that this truth was given to him by direct revelation from God and it is central to the message he is to proclaim. God has linked believing Jews and believing Gentiles together “in Christ”. Verse 6 sums this up as follows: “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,” The message of the gospel is that God has joined believing Jews and Gentiles in one body, that

is, the body of Christ. As such they are therefore the chosen ones "in Christ". They are recipients of God's blessing.

Romans 9-11 have often been at the heart of this discussion and have raised questions in many minds. In these three chapters the Apostle Paul again links Old Testament and New Testament together to show us how God has brought Jew and Gentile together in Jesus Christ. He begins by making it clear that this relationship with God does not come through physical birth, natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These 3 patriarchs each had other sons who were not "chosen". True sons of Abraham are people of faith. This distinction is made in 9:32 where it says "that they sought it not by faith".

In chapter ten Paul goes on to emphasize the importance of true faith in our relationship with God. In 10:10 Paul writes "with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". Chapter 11 tells us that God has not cast away Israel, there is still a believing remnant. However many are blinded in unbelief opening the door for believing Gentiles to be grafted into the root (note verse 17). There is only one root and it is in Christ who is the "seed" of Abraham and God has grafted Gentiles into that root.

The conclusion of this great passage comes at the end of the chapter where Paul says that God is going to graft natural branches back onto the root when "all Israel shall be saved" (11:26). The chapter ends with an expression of praise as Paul contemplates the "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (11:33). The infinite wisdom of God transcends our finite minds and therefore God is praised because He has brought both Jew and Gentile into the position of His Chosen Ones in Jesus Christ. All glory and honor belongs to Him.

The Apostle Peter also speaks to this issue of election in 1 Peter 1:2-3 "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," This phrase seems to point to the fact that our relationship with God is only through Jesus Christ and our being in this chosen position is only because we are "in Him". It seems to point away from individuals being chosen to be in a covenant relationship with God. Rather He is the Chosen One, the Elect of God and we are "in Him". We share all of these blessings because we are "in Him". All who are "in Him" by faith, share in the blessings of the New Covenant.

That we should equate New Testament teaching on election with what is found in the Old Testament is further supported by the way Peter uses Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 43:20,21; Hosea 1:6,9 to establish what he says in 1 Peter 2:9,10. "But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." The fact that we are chosen comes out of these Old Testament Scriptures as Peter quotes them to establish his point. This does not allow us to change how we understand "chosen" in the Old Testament and how we understand it in the New. The concept is the same.

When we put election in this context we see Jesus Christ as God's Chosen One and all who are "in Christ" are therefore chosen ones, heirs to the promised blessings. Election thus speaks of our position in Christ and of all the privileges and blessings that are ours in Him, rather than

referring to a selection process whereby some are to be saved and not others. God's elect ones are in a privileged position because they are "in Christ". God has chosen, before the foundation of the world, that all who are "in Christ" should share in His promised blessings. The focus is therefore on Christ and not on us. All glory goes to Him as God's Chosen One. God has chosen Christ and His seed, those who are spiritually born into Him. I believe that this provides us with Biblical answers to the questions that we raised as to How God has determined who are His "Chosen People".

In Romans 8:28-29 we learn that God has predetermined that all who are "in Christ" will be "conformed to the image of His (God's) Son". This is God's stated purpose which He determined before the foundation of the earth. The sacrificial work of Christ on the cross of Calvary has opened the door for all who will enter by faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus extends this invitation in Revelation 3:20 where we find these words, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

As we summarize what we have learned in both Old and New Testaments let us take note of how the election of Abraham now parallels our position "in Christ".

A. It is Unconditional – God sovereignly chose Jesus Christ and all who are "in Him" as His people

B. It comes with the promise of great blessing - Under the New covenant ratified by Christ's blood we have "all spiritual blessings"

C. It includes Christ's seed with Him - We are His bride, His body and we share in all that is His

D. It has far reaching results - God's plan is still to bring blessing to all families of the earth.

We give praise and glory to God for there is One who is worthy, there is One who is Holy, the Chosen One of God. And God has chosen to include all those who are "in Him" as His own people. We are the people of God and recipients of all spiritual blessings because we are "in Christ". That, and that alone, is the basis of our standing before God. God graciously invites us to come to Him through Christ and find acceptance "in the Beloved One".