

God's Choice of a People

Exodus 19:1-8

Think with me back to when you were in school. Do you remember sitting in class as your teacher explained a new concept to you? The class you are imagining is probably math. Remember how the introduction to the new concept took so long to understand? After lots of questions and much effort on your part, the concept is finally understandable and doable.

Have you ever felt equally inadequate when it comes to understanding God? In our humanity, we try to understand Him and comprehend His ways. Sometimes we wonder if we will ever be able to comprehend. We must realize that we won't ever completely understand Him. If we could, then we would be as great as He is, and we know that is not the case.

Even though we won't fully grasp or understand while we are living on earth. I believe it is good for us to think about Him and discuss His greatness with others. My awe for God grows when I consider His majesty. Seeing God for who He is, also clarifies who I am and how weak we are before Him. These thoughts cause my heart to worship. When we consider the grandeur of God, our language feels weak, and we struggle to express ourselves. Thankfully God knows us and is patient with us.

Today's lesson, God's Choice of a People, sent my mind down this path of awe and worship. When I saw the title, I wondered, how can a God who knows everything make a choice? Does God really know everything about everything? If He does know, then He must know what I am going to choose. If God chose some people, are there some He doesn't choose? I don't have the answers to all these questions, and I can trust Him without these answers, but I did enjoy being overcome by worship when I contemplated His magnificence.

We hope you also will worship Him and be overwhelmed by His splendor. Enjoy the rest of today's lesson from Exodus 19 as J Mark teaches us about God's Choice of a People.

Some of our listeners ask this question: "Why did God choose Israel?" I remind you that we, too, must make choices. Every day we must make decisions. How and what we decide determines what we do, and it affects many other people. There is no choice we make which affects only ourselves. Our choices are made in a rather small area, even when they have to do with our family, church, community, or perhaps, even our nation. Our choices are rather limited.

God also makes choices. What happens when He makes a choice or decision? Does God's choice affect anyone else? Can God, as the all-knowing God, make any choices at all? That is a philosophical question; it deals with things that are outside of the physical realm of life. In Exodus 19:1-8 we see GOD'S CHOICE OF A PEOPLE. He made this choice because He is the possessor of the whole earth. He said, "All the earth is mine."

1. In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

2. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

3. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

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

7. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

8. And all the people answered together, and said, all that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

From this record, I want to show you the proper RESPONSES of those who are chosen to be God's people. We shall make some direct applications to our lives.

The easiest response is,

God's People Consider What God Does.

They first reviewed where they came from. In this particular case, God reminded the people of Israel that they had just come out of Egypt. Egypt, in their day, was a great land. It is still a great land, a land of ancient civilization, a land of great potential and possibility. But for Israel in those days, it was a land of slavery and hardship. Incidentally, Egypt, in the Bible, is often used as a metaphor for sin. It represents the old life without Christ.

But they had come from Egypt and traveled through the wilderness. The way was unmarked; they had never traveled this way before. But God was leading them by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night until they came to the Mount of God: Mount Sinai. So, there was a review of where they had come from.

There was also a review of what God had done. Moses was to tell the house of Jacob, the children of Israel, what God had done on their behalf. He said you saw what I did unto the Egyptians and how I brought you to myself on eagles' wings. Under normal circumstances, their deliverance from Egypt was impossible. But God delights in doing the impossible; He can make a way out of no way! He miraculously brought the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Remember, God had chosen this people long before He delivered them. That's an important truth to keep in mind. When God first called Abraham out of the Ur of the Chaldeans, He said to him, "I will make of you a great nation." Great has several different aspects of meaning. We can think of great in terms of number, or influence. Here, God, in calling them by name, the House of Jacob, Children of Israel, is reminding them of what He did in the lives of the patriarchs.

To be God's people, it is very important to consider God's acts in our behalf. When we are professing believers in God, the God of Jacob, the God of Isaac, the God of Abraham, then we also must give serious consideration to what He does for us.

A second response to God's choice of people moves to a higher level:

God's People Consider What He Decrees.

Notice carefully verses 5 and 6 of this text: "Now therefore if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant then you shall be a peculiar (or special) treasure to me above all people: for all of the earth is mine."

There are two conditions here: if you will obey my voice and if you will keep my covenant. Those conditions have never been altered for Israel or for any people who want to be children of God or part of the people of God. To Israel, God said, you cannot be the people of God if you will not listen to me; if you will not hearken to my voice, and if you will not keep my covenant. But if you do my commands, you will "be a special treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." That is God's decree; it is His authoritative order and is meant to be obeyed.

Consider what God decrees in terms of the conditions and in terms of the outcome. If you will do this, God said, then you will be a special people to me. You will be to me "a kingdom of priests and a holy

nation.” Think of it: a kingdom of priests! The priestly role in the Bible is defined to be one who stands between the people and God. Here this nation, being called of God a holy nation, was to be a kingdom of priests to stand between God and the peoples of all nations.

Considering what God decrees has tremendous implications for us. The people of God must consider what He decrees, and the people of God must understand that the requirement is obedience. That is the key. Faith releases the power with which all this can take place.

The highest response of people chosen by God is,

God’s People Consider What God Desires.

They must take all of it into account. When Moses came down from the top of Mount Sinai, he called for the elders of Israel and laid before them “all these words which the Lord commanded him.” Moses didn’t leave anything out. He said it all just like God told him. Evidently, the people also heard what Moses said as he communicated God’s Word. Moses left no one untouched. They were all to be directly involved in all that God desired.

Consider what God desires and commit all to Him. The Bible tells us all the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” All the people responded. There was unity in the community. All the words of God were important; they refused nothing. They responded, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.”

Now you may be quick to criticize what happened afterwards, but that is not the point here. The point is that God desires complete commitment from His people. All the words of God were important. The people made no exceptions. To be God’s people, acceptance of God’s desires is important, and obedience is the secret. You must come and consider what He desires and commit everything to Him.

To be God’s people, we must follow Israel’s responses. Consider what God does; think of all the blessings that have come to you because of Him. Consider what God decrees; remember, there are no alterations possible. Consider what God desires; out of a true heart of commitment, say, “Yes, all that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Then, we will be among those whom He has chosen to be His people.

Thanks, J. Mark, for this teaching, and thank you for being here for this teaching from God’s Word. It is amazing how timeless the Bible is. We believe this book is the best foundation to live by. For all the hard questions in life, the Bible has the best answers—not the easy answers, but certainly the best ones. And He, Jesus, promises to be with us; what a comforting promise.

If you have any questions or if you'd like a copy of today's teaching, here are a few ways you can contact us. The best way is via email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could write to us. Our address is: Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is heraldsofhope.org. On our website, you will find other teaching similar to this and more helpful resources; please look around while you are there. If you go to the connect tab, you can message us directly. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org.

Thank you so much for being with us. We look forward to next week and hope you will join us for more lessons from Exodus. I will leave you with the comforting promise Jesus left to all His disciples in the last verse of Matthew, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."