

OUR RESPONSE WHEN GOD CHOOSES

We often talk about living in a free country and we are so glad we do have freedoms. When we think about what freedom means, we invariably conclude that so much of our freedom is related to the ability we have to make choices. Sometime we find that rules and traditions will limit our choices. However, we see in many places in the Scripture that God makes choices and is not limited to some set of rules that people have tried to formulate.

The existence of the nation of Israel is an example of God making choices. He chose Abraham of all men. He chose Isaac over Ishmael. He chose Jacob rather than Esau. In choosing Abraham, He demonstrated His *grace*. In choosing Isaac, He demonstrated His *faithfulness* in keeping His promise by choosing the miraculous over the natural. In choosing Jacob, He demonstrated His *sovereignty* by overruling the right of the first born.

In choosing us, He demonstrates all these. His grace, His faithfulness, and His sovereignty. Grace because He initiates the relationship, faithfulness in that He promised to deliver us from the power of the devil, and sovereignty in that He canceled our debt in laying all our sins on Jesus.

God choosing Israel was only one part of the equation. The older generation that came out of Egypt failed to enter the Promised Land because they would not believe. Moses challenged this next generation of the Children of Israel to believe rather than be as their fathers were. The previous generation had either forgotten God's previous mighty acts or doubted that He could do it again. We should not be surprised since we can see evidence in the Church today of those who think God has either "gone out of business" or He is "out to lunch" because they do not put their trust in Him. Forgetfulness and doubt will keep us from functioning as God's people. Our present faith is built on our past relationship with God. There is a need for us to be aware of what God has done and is doing for us. If God blesses us or provides for a special need,

then we must recognize that the benefit comes from God or we cannot build on that experience.

DEUTERONOMY 6:20-25 Moses was a shrewd teacher. He did not teach them as if they were students who needed to learn but as future teachers themselves for their children. Many times people are more motivated to do something for the benefit of their children than they are for their own benefit.

Moses did not just tell them what was to be done but he included why. The bottom line on why they were to keep the commandments was so that God could keep them alive. In other words, they needed to cooperate with God by obey the commands He had given to them. This need is easy for us to see in a simple traffic situation. Traveling north in the south bound lane of an interstate highway is prohibited for the good of the people using the road. But before that rule can do us any good, we have to cooperate. Not only do we have to cooperate but everyone who uses that road must also cooperate. This simple illustration provides some insight to suffering. We may be obeying all the traffic rules and if someone else doesn't, then that could lead to innocent people being hurt in an accident. The Bible teaches us that sin leads to suffering. It may not be our sin for which we suffer but because of the error of others. Another person's sin may not impact me as directly and to the extent of a traffic accident; but, since all of us are so inter-related (no man is an island) then anything that is done to denigrate or abuse another person causes all of us to suffer.

God brought them out of Egypt so He could bring them in to the land He had chosen to give them. He had much more in mind than just having them leave Egypt. They were to go in and possess the land. Before they could do that it was not only necessary that they come out of Egypt but they also needed to get Egypt out of themselves and behave as a holy (chosen) people.