

MY TREASURED POSSESSION

Exodus 19:5-6

Moses announced God's intention to select Israel as His covenant people, a selection that gave them a treasured status before God and a unique identity in the world. God did not, however, randomly select Israel and His selection of the Israelites did not prejudice Him against other nations. Rather, God's selection of Israel became a way for God to reveal His identity so that He could draw all nations, all peoples into a relationship with Him, a relationship He modeled through His selection of Israel. This lesson will consider the relational agenda driving God's selection of Israel and what that agenda means for us today.

A relationship-seeking God

- God announced to Israel that He selected them to be His “treasured possession”¹, not because of any qualities they possessed, but because of His faithfulness to the promises He made to Abraham (*Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:7; Genesis 12:1-3*).
- But God let Israel know that He did not chose them merely out of obligation to His promise; He also loved them and desired a relationship with them (*Deuteronomy 7:6-11*).
- God's selection of Israel to be His “treasured possession” carried with it a series of important blessings and responsibilities like:
 - They experienced God's presence in their midst (*Exodus 19:10-11, 16-20; 25:8*)
 - They entered into a covenant with God, a unique, formal, and mutually binding relationship between themselves and God (*Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 10:12-22; 26:16-19; 28:1-68; 30:1-10*).
 - They received the designation of “holy”; they became a people chosen by God to belong to Him and to serve His purposes (*Leviticus 19:2; Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:1-8*).
- The covenant responsibilities God gave to Israel as part of His relationship with them served a purpose larger than merely the wellbeing of the nation; God intended His covenant relationship with the Israelites to (re)establish His relationship with humanity.
 - God's promises to Abraham intended to use Abraham's family to accomplish a global agenda (*Genesis 12:1-3; 22:17-18*).
 - God began to reveal to Moses both how He would use Abraham's family to accomplish that agenda as well as the nature of that agenda. He, for example:
 - Revealed new insights into His identity through His relationship with Israel (*Exodus 6:2-8; 8:20-22; Deuteronomy 4:1-8; 32:5-7*).

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.

- Created a place where He could restore peoples' access to Him in a way that echoed the access humanity had in Eden (*Genesis 3:3-8; Exodus 25:31-40; 1 Kings 6:29-36; Ezekiel 41:17-20, 25-26*).
- He commissioned Israel to serve as his "kingdom of priests" so that they could mediate between Him and the nations by revealing His identity and will to the world through their relationship with Him (*Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:1-8*).
- God remained faithful to the purpose of His covenant with Israel despite Israel's unfaithfulness to Him (*Exodus 32:1-34:28; Ezekiel 36:22-38*). His faithfulness reveals the value he places on a relationship with humanity. Consider:
 - God made humanity in His image so that He could partner with them in ruling His creation (*Genesis 1:26-28; Revelation 22:1-5*), which He made for the purpose of hosting His relationship with humans (*cf. Genesis 1:14-19*).
 - God announced that His "dwelling place...is with man" (*Revelation 21:3*).
 - "God is love" and He created humans to be the beneficiaries of His love and to enter into a loving relationship with Him (*Deuteronomy 7:7-8; 10:12-13; 1 John 4:8-10; John 3:16-17*).

Applications

- From the beginning of the Bible, God reveals Himself to be a God who desires a relationship with us – we *are* important to Him; *all people* are important to Him.
- Because God is a god who desires relationships, we should be people who seek relationships. We should, therefore:
 - Seek relationships with all people and not just the people like us.
 - Seek relationships that orient people on God.
 - Seek relationships that pursue God's restorative purpose.
 - Be people in a relationship with God rather than merely people "of the book".
 - Be people whose understandings about the Bible filter themselves through God's personal, relational identity rather than legal or philosophical abstractions.

God's selection of Israel pursued a clear agenda – He sought to establish a relationship with the nation that would restore His relationship with the world. God has chosen us to be His Israel in the world today and He pursues the same agenda through us. We have the responsibility of allowing God to work His agenda through us by submitting to His will in our own relationship with Him. The question we need to ask ourselves, therefore, is, "Does my personal relationship with God further His agenda or do I allow my own interests to interfere with His purposes?"