

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class

"The Gospel of Eternal Election and Predestination"

Opening Hymn: 822 "Alleluia! Let Praises Ring" (see stanza 2)

What do you think of when you hear the word "election"? _____

What is the purpose of us electing someone into an office or job? _____

How would we describe what these people are supposed to do? _____

I. God's Choosing of His Old Testament People

A. The Hebrew word bakr

The root of this verb and its derivations occur 198 times in the Old Testament. The idea is evidently "to take a keen look at." It always involves a careful, well thought-out choice. Its uses are split between divine choice based on God's grace and human choosing, either of a godly nature or reflecting our sinful selfishness (e.g. Lot's choice of the better land in the plain of the Jordan River in Genesis 13:11).

Ninety-two times God is the subject of the verb and 13 times divine election is in the passive form. When God is the subject, the term has a very definite doctrinal significance. It expresses a resolve of the divine will with an element of insistence. Election and calling are regarded as distinct. The former stresses the subject (God), while the latter stresses the action (choosing). In general, the election of individuals occurs in the context of the election of the community (we cannot cut ourselves off from the family of faith into which God places us).

Psalm 65:4 Blessed is the one You choose and bring near to dwell in Your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of Your temple!

Deuteronomy 14:2 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen (bakr) you to be a people for His treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

The thought of national election finds clear formulation in Deuteronomy 14:2 but it is implicit in the basic idea that Israel is God's people. In Deuteronomy the election of the people rests on the love of God, not on any national qualities, and it carries with it a commitment to holiness. Election means rejection and judgment on false religions. Election means education. God's action in election is purposeful, we are to be what God has made us to be. Election means mission. We are to be a light to the world. The love of God is the heart of our election. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (one volume) pages 515-517*

Deuteronomy 4:37 (Moses says) And because He loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with His own presence, by His great power

Deuteronomy 10:15 (Moses says) Yet the Lord set His heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

The word is used to express that choosing which has ultimate and eternal significance. God chooses a people, tribes, individuals and a place for His name. In all of these cases,

service rather than random selection is at the heart of the choosing. Thus, Yahweh chose Israel to be holy and thereby to serve as His witness among the nations. But their election is not based on their own greatness but on the greatness of the Lord's love.

The scriptural doctrine of divine capacity for choice demonstrates that purpose and personality, not blind mechanism, are at the heart of the universe. Since God carefully chooses certain ones for a specific task, He can also reject them if they deviate from that purpose. An example of this is the story of the High Priest Eli in 1st Samuel 2:27ff. (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Volume I, page 100*)

B. Deuteronomy 7:1-11

How can we describe verses 1-2a, law or gospel? _____; **verses 2b-5** _____
God's plan for these unbelieving, pagan, heathen, idolatrous, full of sin nations might sound harsh and cruel to our modern, "enlightened" sensibilities. We might react with disdain at such commands. But think of it this way, what if your doctor asked you, "How many cancer cells would you like me to leave in your body?" or your plumber says, "How much lead would you like me to leave in your water pipes?" or your baker says, "How much cow manure can I put in the brownies I am baking for you?" Our reaction to those questions helps to explain God's view of godless idolatry being mixed in with His people's faith in Him and worship of Him.

Verse 6: How does Moses first describe the Israelites in this verse?

"_____ to the _____, your God"

What has God done for them? "_____ them out of all the _____ on the _____ of the _____"

How else does Moses describe the Israelites? "His treasured _____"

Verse 7: What is not a reason that God chose them? _____

We are not to get a big head, or become conceited, about God's choosing of us to be His people. It is not about us! ("How odd of God to choose the Jews.")

Verse 8: What is the first word? _____

What are the two reasons that God chose these people?

"because the Lord _____ you" and is keeping the _____ He swore to your _____" (God keeps His word of promise to His people.)

Because of these two things, what has God now done for these people?

"brought you out with a _____ hand and redeemed you from the _____ of slavery"

Verse 9: How does Moses describe the Lord? _____

"the _____ God who _____ (His) _____ of _____"

But who are the objects of that love?

"those who _____ Him and _____ His commandments"

Verse 10: But what happens to those who hate Him? "Repay by _____"

Verse 11: So then, what shall we be sure to do? _____

Next lesson: Election to Salvation in the New Testament