Old Covenant to the New: Who are Today’s God’s Chosen

Christ’s Sacrifice Ended the Sacrificial System

1. The Jews Were God’s Chosen People

God chose Israel to be His special people, setting them apart from other nations. This is clear in the Old Testament, where God established a covenant with them, gave them the Law, and expected them to uphold His commandments.

- **Deuteronomy 7:6** – “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

2. Rejection of Christ as the Messiah

When Jesus, the prophesied Messiah, came to His own people (the Jews), many did not recognize or accept Him. This rejection was a turning point, marking a shift in God’s plan of salvation to include the Gentiles, as foretold by the prophets.

- **John 1:11** – “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”
- **Acts 13:46** – “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

3. End of the Old Covenant and Sacrificial System

The death of Christ brought an end to the Old Covenant, which was based on the Law of Moses and the sacrificial system. His death was the ultimate sacrifice that fulfilled the requirements of the Law and initiated the New Covenant.

- **Hebrews 9:15-17** – "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
- **Hebrews 10:10** – "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

4. Christ's Sacrifice as the Final Sacrifice

Christ's death on the cross was the final sacrifice for sin, meaning no further offerings for sin are needed. His blood is sufficient to atone for the sins of the world, rendering the old sacrificial system obsolete.

- **Hebrews 9:12** – "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."
- **Hebrews 10:18** – "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

5. The Jews No Longer Performing

Sacrifices

In the Old Testament, the sacrificial system was a central part of the covenant between God and Israel. Animal sacrifices were required as atonement for sin, with specific instructions laid out in the Law of Moses (see Leviticus 1–7). These sacrifices had to be performed at the Tabernacle, and later at the Temple in Jerusalem, by the Levitical priesthood.

Key Scriptures Supporting the Old Covenant Sacrificial System:

- **Leviticus 17:11** – "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
- **Exodus 29:38-39** – "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even."

Cessation of Sacrifices After the Second Temple's Destruction

The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD by the Romans had a profound impact on Judaism. The Temple was the only place where sacrifices could lawfully be made, and without it, the sacrificial system as commanded in the Law of Moses was halted. Since then, Jews have been unable to offer animal sacrifices for atonement, as these were directly tied to the Temple and the priesthood.

Key Historical Point:

- **Matthew 24:1-2** – Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple: "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you,

> There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

In response to the destruction of the Temple, Judaism adapted by shifting toward a focus on prayer, repentance, and good deeds as substitutes for the sacrificial system. However, without the shedding of blood, there is no means under the Mosaic Law for atoning for sin in the precise manner it originally prescribed (as seen in Leviticus 17:11).

Theological Implication for Christianity

For Christians, the cessation of sacrifices after the destruction of the Temple aligns with the belief that Jesus’ sacrifice was the final and ultimate atonement for sin. His death fulfilled the requirement for blood sacrifices under the Old Covenant, bringing an end to the need for continuous animal offerings.

Hebrews 9:11-12 – “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

This points to a theological shift: those who accept Christ’s sacrifice no longer rely on the Temple’s sacrificial system but instead trust in the sufficiency of Jesus’ death and resurrection. As mentioned in Hebrews 10:18, “Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” This makes Jesus’ sacrifice the conclusive act of atonement, replacing the ongoing sacrificial rituals under the Old Covenant.

6. To Be God’s Chosen Now, One Must Come to Christ

The New Covenant, established by Christ’s death, invites all—both Jews and Gentiles—to become part of God’s chosen people through faith in Jesus. The only way to come to the Father is through Him.

- **John 14:6** – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
- **Romans 10:4** – “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

7. Jews Can Be Grafted Back in by Accepting Christ

Paul explains in Romans that although many Jews rejected Christ, they are not beyond redemption. They can be grafted back into God’s family by accepting Jesus as the Messiah.

- **Romans 11:23-24** – “And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.”

8. Jew and Greek Are One in Christ

In Christ, there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Both are equal in the body of Christ, and salvation is available to all who believe.

- **Galatians 3:28** – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- **Romans 10:12** – “For there is no difference between the

Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is

Conclusion

The sacrificial system under the Old Covenant was a central aspect of the relationship between God and Israel, designed to atone for sins through the shedding of animal blood. However, with the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by many Jews and the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, that system came to an end. Without the Temple, there is no longer a place to offer sacrifices as prescribed in the Mosaic Law, and thus no way for Jews to atone for their sins in the way the Old Covenant required.

In Christianity, the death of Christ is seen as the fulfillment and conclusion of the Old Covenant. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross serves as the final atonement for sin, available to all—both Jew and Gentile. Today, to be part of God's chosen people, one must come to Christ, accepting His sacrificial death as the only means of salvation. In Christ, the division between Jew and Greek is abolished, and all who believe are grafted into the same olive tree, with Christ as the root.

This belief highlights the transition from the Old Covenant, centered on the law and sacrifices, to the New Covenant, based on grace and faith in Christ. Therefore, whether Jew or Gentile, anyone who accepts Jesus as Lord becomes part of the people of God, united as one body in Christ.

So, the final answer to the question of who God's chosen people are today is this: They are those who have come to Christ. Contrary to the widespread belief that Jews alone remain God's chosen people, a thorough study of Scripture reveals that the New Covenant has transformed this understanding. Through Christ, the old system of the covenant has been fulfilled, and it is now through faith in Him that

one is counted among God’s chosen.