**Deuteronomy 7:7-11**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-7/deuteronomy-77-11/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-7/deuteronomy-77-11/)

*God’s election of Israel was a free gift, which was based upon His gracious love for them and His faithfulness to their forefathers. Although this gift of being God’s possession is unconditional and irrevocable, to gain the experiential benefit of God’s blessings requires Israel to uphold their obligations under the covenant, and obey God, their sovereign ruler.*

Having commanded the Israelites to destroy the seven nations living in the Promised Land (7:1-6), Moses now reminds them of God’s gracious *love* and faithfulness to them and their forefathers. He declared, *The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples*. God did not choose Israel because they were largest, and therefore most powerful people. Just the opposite they were *the fewest of all peoples.*Therefore the least powerful.

The people of Israel were chosen *because the LORD loved*them and because God*kept the oath which He swore to*Israel’s*forefathers*.” God is making it clear that Israel was to have humility about their task. They are not being asked to destroy these nations because they are superior. But because of their covenant relationship with God.

God is faithful to His words. He made unconditional promises to Israel, through Abram (and later to Isaac and Jacob), making the people of Israel His own people, and granting them title to the land ([Genesis 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12&t=NASB95), 26, and 28). Moses reminds Israel of their heritage, telling them “*The LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”*

The LORD alone *redeemed* His people *from the hand of Pharaoh*, the Egyptian king who might have been the most powerful ruler on earth at that time. The verb translated here as “redeemed” (Padah, in Hebrew) stresses the idea that a ransom price was to be paid to free a slave, that is, to confer upon him/her the legal rights and privileges of independent status. According to the ancient Near Eastern custom of redemption, such a ransom would involve presenting something of equivalent value to liberate the person. In this case, God’s redemptive act was performed with *a mighty hand*, since God redeemed Israel through miraculous intervention.

God kept His word, and will continue to do so. God states further, “*Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments*.” *God*is *faithful,*and always keeps His end of the agreement. God had made a *covenant* with Israel, and *keeps His covenant* no matter what circumstances might occur. God does not change. But part of the agreement is that God will bless obedience and discipline disobedience.

In fact, God blesses those who *love Him and keep His commandments*to an extent that reaches well beyond just the generation that obeys Him. God rewards obedience by showing His *lovingkindness to a thousandth generation.*The phrase *a thousandth generation*might mean an indefinite time. God’s *lovingkindness*is illustrated throughout the history of Israel. God consistently fathers and shepherds them toward their best interest, teaching them lessons and showing them the constructive path forward. A part of God’s fathering and shepherding is to discipline His people. God judges unrighteous behavior. God already said He did not choose Israel as *His own possession*because they were a great people. In chapter 9, God says to Israel:

*Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people. ([Deut 9:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut+9.6&t=NASB95" \t "BLB_NW))*

God’s acceptance of Israel as His people is by grace. God’s acceptance of Israel as His children is unconditional, and irrevocable ([Romans 11:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.29&t=NASB95)). But that does not mean there are not consequences to their choices. They are in a covenant relationship with God, and in order to secure the blessings of God, their ruler, the vassals must live in obedience. Unrighteous behavior brings judgment even for those whom God has accepted unconditionally as *His own possession*.

The Israelites have already seen what judgment on unrighteousness looked like. Moses reminded the Israelites that the LORD “*repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face*.” Those people who hate the LORD are judged. This principle applies to those who are in covenant relationship with God as well as to those who are not. God repeatedly warns Israel that He will enforce their obligations under the covenant, and judge them if they are unfaithful. God will never reject them, but He will judge them for disobedience.

Moses urged the Israelites to observe God’s laws in order to enjoy the benefits of the covenant relationship. He said, “*Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them*.” The alternative for the Israelites is to break their obligations under the covenant, and be judged. We will see this transpire as Israel’s history unfolds. When Israel falls into disobedience, and breaks their end of the covenant, God gives them over to their desires. But God never rejects them as His children, as *His own possession*. God continues to remain faithful to fulfill His part of the agreement. In [Romans 11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11&t=NASB95) Paul makes a passionate argument that this is still the case on the other side of the cross.

“…and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,

HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

“THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,

WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”([Romans 11:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.26-29&t=NASB95))*.*

The parts of [Romans 11:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.26-29&t=NASB95) in all capital letters are quotes from the Old Testament, predictions of God’s everlasting faithfulness, discussed more fully in our Romans commentary. This demonstrates that God’s faithfulness is unwavering, But God’s election of Israel as *His own possession*does not mean they no longer have responsibility. Quite the opposite. They have responsibilities, and their actions will have immense consequences, and will lead either to blessings or curses. Life or death.

Moses asserts that God *is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant.*God will always keep his part of the deal. That includes bringing immense blessings upon*those who love Him and keep His commandments.*It also includes repaying*those who hate Him to their faces.*As opposed to rewarding obedience through showing *His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments,*God will respond to disobedience with severe judgement,*to destroy them.*And God *will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face***.**

Moses concludes this passage with an application. *Therefore,*given the realities of God’s great rewards for obedience and severe judgment for disobedience, Moses commands Israel to*keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.*Moses used three words (commandment, statutes, and judgments) consistent with the pattern to this point (see 5:31; 6:1).

Moses presents a stark and clear decision tree. There are two clear options, with nothing between. Israel can obey and receive unimaginable blessings, or disobey and get destruction. A picture of how God can bring destruction upon Israel’s disobedience while steadfastly continuing to love Israel as *His own possession*is shown throughout Israel’s story. One clear illustration can be found in [Jeremiah 29:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+29.11&t=NASB95), where God says to Israelites dwelling in the Promised Land:

*For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope ([Jer 29:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer+29.11&t=NASB95" \t "BLB_NW)).*

In the next few verses God makes it clear that those hearing this prophecy are about to be a part of a massive destruction of the land. Many will die, their homeland will be ravaged, and they will be removed to live as exiles in a foreign land.

*thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, I am sending upon them the sword, famine and pestilence, and I will make them like split-open figs that cannot be eaten due to rottenness. I will pursue them with the sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse and a horror and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, because they have not listened to My words,’ declares the LORD, ‘which I sent to them again and again by My servants the prophets; but you did not listen,’ declares the LORD ([Jer 29:17-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer+29.17-19&t=NASB95" \t "BLB_NW))*

Moses wants to make it clear to Israel that although God’s love for them is unconditional, and His *faithfulness* is certain, Israel’s end of the bargain, their contractual obligations under the covenant, come with immense consequences. The covenants that apply to them will be strictly, and reliably enforced.

**Biblical Text:**

**7“The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; 10but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. 11Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.**