

GOD'S FAVORITE

A Devotional Meditation on V'ZOT HABRACHA (THIS IS THE BLESSING)

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12; Joshua 1:1-18; Zechariah 2:10-12;
Matthew 12:22-32; Luke 14:15-24; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 5:9-10

Albert J. McCarn
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My daughters can tell you they are both my favorites. One is my favorite oldest daughter, and the other is my favorite youngest daughter. When they were children, one was my favorite soccer player, and the other was my favorite dancer. I still count them both as my favorites, and my joy is now multiplied as they have brought my favorite sons-in-law and my favorite grandchildren into the family.



Photo by Tonia Kraakman, Alexandra, New Zealand, December 22, 2021, [on Unsplash](#).

This is a picture of how God's family works. The testimony of scripture indicates that our Heavenly Father is more interested in expanding his family than in limiting access to it. That is what we understand from Yeshua's teachings, such as his parable about the man who invited friends to a great banquet, and when they gave reasons why they couldn't come, he had his servants bring in people from the highways and hedges so that his house would be filled. The original guests could have come also if they had apologized and asked to be included. That would have increased the joy of the host even more. However, since they chose not to come, they fell into another category Yeshua mentioned:

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Matthew 12:30 ESV

This is a message of inclusion and of hope. It speaks of a time when the hosts of heaven praise the Lamb of God, saying:

Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 5:9-10 ESV

That is a grand hope for Christians. The problem, though, is that too often it has been used as a reason to exclude the ones who first received God's promise of inclusion. That would be the Jewish people, the visible remnant of God's Covenant nation of Israel. Jews pin their hopes on God's promises in passages like this one in Zechariah:

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD. And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

Zechariah 2:10-12 ESV

This is how we know the Jewish people are the chosen people of God. They are the House of Judah, and as Zechariah records, they are God's own inheritance. That is very special indeed—special enough that Jews could claim to be God's favorites.

But then, Christians make that same claim. Peter the apostle even says as much:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV

How do we reconcile this apparent contradiction?

The sad truth is that neither portion of God's chosen people have historically tried to resolve it. Each has recognized their own legitimate claims to be the true Israel of God, but have denied the legitimate claims of the other. In essence, each says they are God's favorite while saying the other has no place in God's esteem.

Much of this contention concerns the division over Messiah's identity. Christian claims of inclusion in the New Covenant God made with Israel come from our identity in Messiah Yeshua. Jews do not recognize such claims, insisting that one cannot become part of Israel unless one is Jewish.

What if God's solution involves inclusion rather than exclusion? What if he is making a way for both the native born and the foreigners from the nations to take part in the same Covenant and become part of the same people?

That is exactly what he is doing. It's the reason Zechariah agrees with Peter and John when he writes, "And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people."

This is more important than we may realize. Being part of Israel means being part of the people God saves, defends, and promotes, as we learn from Moses:

"There is none like God, O Jeshurun,
who rides through the heavens to your help,
through the skies in his majesty.
The eternal God is your dwelling place,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
And he thrust out the enemy before you
and said, 'Destroy.'
So Israel lived in safety,
Jacob lived alone,
in a land of grain and wine,

whose heavens drop down dew.
Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you,
a people saved by the LORD,
the shield of your help,
and the sword of your triumph!
Your enemies shall come fawning to you,
and you shall tread upon their backs.”

Deuteronomy 33:26-29 ESV

Our God is big enough to do this for both the native-born Jews and the adopted foreigners. Both are part of his Covenant people, and both share equally in his esteem. In that sense, we are all God’s favorite.