

## Supplemental Texts for "Chosen And Approved"

### I. From the Torah

#### 1. Enoch

"And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methuselah, three hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were 365 years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was no longer, for God had taken him" (Genesis 4:22-24).

#### 2. Israel as the Chosen People

"Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from all the peoples, for all the earth is mine" (Exodus 19:5).

#### 3. Israel is bound by love:

"The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord love you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your ancestors" (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

### II. From the Prophets

#### 1. Chosenness is linked to responsibility (and therefore also consequences)

"You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins" Amos (c. 750 BCE).

#### 2. Proof of consequences

"Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jeremiah 7:1-12, referring to the temple where the Tabernacle was housed prior to Jerusalem and where Eli was the prophet and priest; the Philistines destroyed that temple and Eli's two sons were killed—to be replaced by the prophet Samuel).

#### 3. The permanence of Israel's election

"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back." (Isaiah 54:7)

### III. From the Midrash and Talmud

#### 1. Why was Israel chosen (B. Talmud Beitzah 25b)

"A Tanna taught in the name of R. Meir: Why was the Torah given to Israel? Because they are impetuous [*'azin*—fierce, strong]. The School of R. Ishmael taught: 'At His right hand was a fiery law unto them' (Deut. 33:2). [That is to say:] The Holy One, blessed be He, said: These are worthy to be given the fiery law. Some say: The laws of these are like fire, for had not the Law been given to Israel no nation or tongue could withstand them. And this is what R. Simeon b. Lakish said: There are three distinguished in strength [*'azin*, fierce]: Israel among the nations, the dog among animals, [and] the cock among birds. Some say: Also the goat among small cattle. And some say: Also the caper-bush among shrubs (for its tendency to grow rapidly again after being cut).

#### 2. One can choose to be chosen (Midrash Rabba Bamidbar 13:15)

"A non-Jew who converts and studies Torah is [considered as holy as] the High Priest."

#### 3. Chosenness as a product of suffering and oppression (Mid. R. Exodus 36:1)

"The Nation of Israel is likened to the olive. Just as this fruit yields its precious oil only after being much pressed and squeezed, so Israel's destiny is one of great oppression and hardship, in order that it may thereby give forth its illuminating wisdom."

#### 4. Israel vs. the other nations

##### a. Midrash Shir Hashirim—Song of Songs

"Solomon composed many songs [which is the reason for the plural 'Songs']. It contains the praise of God, the praise of Torah and the praise of Israel. How do we know that it is the praise of God? For it is said, 'His head is of finest gold' [Song 5:10]. And how do we know that it refers to the Torah? For it is said, 'And his banner of love is over me' [Song 2:4]. And how do we know it refers to Israel? For it is said, 'Like a lily among the thorns' [Song 2:2]

##### b. Midrash Tehillim (Psalms)

"Israel is like the wheat among the chaff."

### IV. God's love expressed by choosing Israel to receive the Torah

#### 1. Midrash Tanhuma

"Until you received the Torah, you were Israel, one of many peoples, each of which had its name. Once you received the Torah, you became 'My People'"