

STONE HARBOR

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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherd's heart,
Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: Jan 24, 2009
 Series: The Church of God's Intention
 Part: Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be
 Section: The New People of God
 Topic: The Church
 Message Title: The Beginning of the People of God -2
 Short Title: The Beginning -2
 Text: Various
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Message Outline

The Church of God's Intention
 Part 1 What God Intends the Church to Be
 The New People of God
 The Beginning of the People of God -2

I. They were **Purposed** by God (See 1)

God purposed that His people would be and that they would glorify Him by knowing Him and enjoying the same intimate communion and love that God the Father has always enjoyed with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; and from that relationship, that they would rule over the rest of creation on His behalf.

II. They were **Created** by God (See 1)

God created His people by His determination and His action bearing His image and sharing His relational nature and ability. God placed them in the garden He had created for them and there made Himself available to be with and be known by them as they lived out His purposes for them.

III. They were **Estranged** from God

IV. They were **Redeemed** by God

V. They **Anticipated** the Final People of God

Related Scripture

1. 1 Peter 2:9-10
2. Gen 1-3
3. Gen 6-10
4. Gen 12-17
5. Exodus 6:1-8,
6. Exodus 12:1-51
7. Exodus 19, 24

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What became of God's people after they fell in the garden?
2. How do Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David help you understand God's dealings with a redeemed people of God?
3. Why did God choose one segment of humanity to call His people?
4. In what way did people of God of the Old Testament anticipate a final people of God?

Memory and Meditation Verse

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. 1 Peter 2:9-10 NASB

The Beginning of the People of God (continued)

The Beginning of the People of God (continued)

In our pursuit of discovering *The Church of God's Intention*, today we will finish looking at the Old Testament (OT) People of God (POG) with an ear to understanding the church that emerged out of them. Last week we saw that God intends the Church to be 'the new people of God'. And we began to consider this concept of the POG by noting they were **purposed** and **created** by God.

God **purposed** that His people would be and that they would glorify Him by knowing Him and enjoying the same intimate communion and love that God the Father has always enjoyed with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; and from that relationship, that they would rule over the rest of creation on His behalf.

God **created** His people by His determination and His action bearing His image and sharing His relational nature and ability. God placed them in the garden He had created for them and there made Himself available to be with and be known by them as they lived out His purposes for them.

This week we will finish our look at the beginning of the POG by noting their sad estrangement from God and His gracious redemption of them and how all His initial dealings: His purpose, creation, estrangement, redemption, all anticipated a future final redemption unto an ultimate reconciliation with Him and the accomplishment of His original purposes.

c) They were **Estranged from God**

(1) The POG Fell

Their Father-son relationship with God characterized by intimate communion and love for all its value was soon damaged. In Adam & Eve's yielding to the temptation and deception of Satan who came to them in the form of a serpent offering them something he said was even better than what God had given them, they shattered what they had. The result? Cursing & estrangement from God.

(2) They Came under a Curse

(a) Of the Serpent – Gen 3:14-15

(b) Of the Woman – Gen 3:16

(c) Of the Man – Gen 3:17-19

The most severe consequence of their rebellion against God was their...

(3) Their Communion was Replaced by Estrangement

Gen 3:23-24 -- "therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim

and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.”

No longer would God dwell with man in the garden sanctuary He had provided for that purpose. But now they must live apart from the garden and most tragically, apart from God. The intimate communion they had enjoyed was no more! The purpose for which God had created them was not being met.

(4) They Continued to ‘Live’ -- but Not the Life of God’s Intention

(a) Estranged but Not Abandoned

They were fallen & estranged from but not abandoned.
God made them clothes before He sent them out of the garden.
Gen 3:21

(b) Needed to be Redeemed

They had become people who needed to be redeemed should they ever function according to God’s purpose.

(c) Examples of Need

(i) Cain and Abel

Adam & Eve’s first two sons demonstrated their desperate condition. Cain rose up and killed his brother Able over a dispute stemming out of their attempts to worship the God they had been estranged from.

(ii) Noah’s Contemporaries

The POG became so corrupt that God was even sorry He had created them. What an indictment of their desperate condition.

But God’s purposes would prevail. He would be glorified. But NOT because His people were being the people of His design, NOT because His people would pull out of their self inflicted tale spin by their own efforts, but because He is God and He would pull them out!

What would God do? He would redeem His people and reconcile them to Himself.

d) They were Redeemed by God

(1) Redemption in Promise

(a) Gen 3:15

(b) Where Redemption is Seen in this Verse

(i) Crushing of the head of the seed of the serpent implies the end of the serpent's impact -- the reversal of the curse – the deliverance/redemption of people out of their estrangement and into communion.

(2) Redemption in Prototype

(a) Overview of Succeeding Manifestations of the Redeemed POG

We see God redeeming creation by working with His people (some of mankind and not others) and through His people to the rest of the people. And even more narrowly at whatever point in history you look you see God working with and through one person in particular. God worked in a special way with...

(i) Seth not Cain (Gen 4:25-26; 5:1-32)

Note line of Cain dead ended as far as God's dealing with them in redemptive history, while Seth's line bears Noah.

(ii) Noah not any others of his generation (Gen 6-10)

(iii) Shem not Ham

(iv) Abraham not others

(v) Isaac not Ishmael (Gen 17:17-19; 21:10, 12)

(vi) Jacob not Esau

(vii) Israel not the other nations

Lv 26:12 "I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."

(viii) David not his brothers

God's history of redemption via the POG and most narrowly through one man can and should prepare the reader of Scripture for the ultimate One in whom redemption would be perfectly and finally accomplished – the One Christ Jesus.

(ix) Jesus no other

In Matthew 7:13-14 – Jesus speaking on *The Narrow and Wide Gates* says, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

[John 14:6](#) -- Jesus said..., “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Peter speaking of Jesus in [Acts 4:12](#) says, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (see context in Acts 4:1-12)

Some see it as insultingly narrow-minded -- intolerably intolerant -- that God would work His redemption only through one Man and not others. But isn't that the way He as always chosen to act? The Creator who purposed creation including us and then created all things giving us our very life – the Creator chooses to redeem creation to redeem us through the agency of One man, ultimately the Man Christ Jesus.

Paul the Apostle said beginning in Romans 5:12,

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- 13for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

But this talk of Jesus is getting ahead of ourselves as in Him is the culmination of the POG and we are first seeking to understand the beginning. In our pursuit of discovering the Church of God's intention according to the Scriptures we are looking at the early manifestations of the POG in the OT that we might most clearly understand the NPOG which is the church that we are a part of. To understand the OT POG we need to understand them as a people

who God has redeemed! Let's look at a few examples of God's initial redemptive acts re: the OT POG, that we might understand God's ultimate redemption in Christ for the NPOG.

(b) Examples of OT POG as Redeemed by God

(i) Noah (and his family as the POG)

We are familiar with the story of Noah mostly as the man with the big boat, a bunch of animals, a lot of rain and a rainbow at the end of the story. But consider Noah with me in regards to the POG and particularly God's redemption of His people.

Noah's contemporaries were bad (Gen 6:5-8, 11-13)

God assessment of the fallen condition of His creation:

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." Gen 6:5-6

But, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God." (Gen 6:9, 7:1)

God's response:

- Judgment on the 'wicked' (6:13, 17);
- Deliverance of Noah and those who were related to him, and a remnant of the animals (6:14ff, 18);
- New beginning (Life out of Death) with Noah and His family and the animals from the ark (not creation out of nothing but salvation of part of what was, and the repopulating of the earth with that) –
- Establishing of His covenant (6:18, 9:9-17) with Noah, his descendents and every living creature;
- Noah worshipped God (8:20)
- Re-commissioning (Cultural Mandate -- [Genesis 8:17](#) -- "Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be **fruitful** and **multiply** on the earth." (see also 9:1-2, which implies the dominion of the first expression of the Cultural Mandate in 1:28 as well as 9:7))
- Using an ark of God's design (6:14ff), God redeemed this subset of humanity (Noah and his family), sparing them from His judgment, to be the POG who would carry out His mandate afresh.

(ii) Abraham (Issac & Jacob as the POG)

In the line of Noah and specifically in the line of one of his sons, Shem, came Abram, who God would later rename Abraham, and his barren wife Sarai who God would later rename Sarah (Gen 12ff).

Read Gen 12:1-3

God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans (15:7) and Haran (12:5) (a type of deliverance from pagan culture) and promised that He would make him a great nation, bless him, make his name great and from that position Abraham would himself be a blessing (2). God further promised to bless those who blessed him and to curse those who cursed him. And then expanding the scope of His blessing through Abraham He says in verse 3, “And in you **all the families of the world** will be blessed.” The blessing that comes through Abraham will be on a global scale!

So Abraham goes from Haran according to the word of the Lord (12:1) and he comes into Canaan and there God promised to give that land to his descendants (7). There Abraham worshipped God (12:7b, 13:4, 18).

God delivered Abraham from a famine and from harm in Egypt where he had gone to escape that famine. And even in spite of **his deceit** (12:1-20) God blessed him with great wealth (13:2).

God reaffirms His land promise (13:14-15, 17) and formally executes a covenant between Abraham and Himself (15:7-21; 17:8) in that regards.

God reaffirms His promise of descendants (13:16, 15:1-5) and formally establishes His covenant with Abraham in that regard (17:1ff) extending His original promise by now promising Abraham that he would become “the father of a multitude of nations” (4, 6) and even kings (6). “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you... I will be their God” (17:7-8)

God by His determination chose Abraham and his descendents to be the POG. He required of them that the sign of being the covenant POG would be circumcision (17:9ff) and interestingly not only the biological descendents of Abraham were included in the POG but also the servants born or bought into Abraham's household and circumcised were included (17:12-14).

Sarah's inability to conceive children seemed to make it impossible for God to keep his promise that Abraham would have many descendants and those through Sarah even nations and kings through her (17:15-16). Abraham even pleaded with God that **Ishmael, the son born to Abraham by Sarah's maid Hagar**, might be the one through whom God would bring all the promised descendants. "But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him." (17:19)

Why is this part of the story relevant to our discussion of the church and the OT POG who were its seed bed? Because God enabled Sarah to conceive the child Isaac (21:1-2) out of the barrenness of her womb and the old age of both Abraham and Sarah (17:17 (100/90 yrs), 18:11). We see here God as redeemer of the POG – a people who would not even have existed had God not caused them to be, a people who would not have been His people had He not initiated His covenant with them.

Abraham and the POG associated with Him were the POG by God's determination and active miraculous involvement! This is a characteristic of the OT POG and we shall see it to be true of the NPOG as well.

Abraham & His descendants also were people with a divine mission.

(a) The Abrahamic Mission

God working through Abraham & his descendants to the rest of the people to bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12:1-3).

(iii) Israel till David

Edmund Clowney in his book, *The Church*, highlights the nation of Israel as the most prominent expression of the POG. Israel as a nation sprang out of Israel the man. Abraham was the focal point of God's redemptive activity in his day, then God continued His work through Abraham's son Isaac, and then through Isaac's son Jacob, who God gave the name Israel and whose 12 sons became the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. Settled in the land of Canaan when a famine hit they found refuge in Egypt where there was plentiful food due to God's placement of Joseph, one of Jacob's 12 sons, in the position of ruler 2nd

only to Pharaoh. Starting as honored guests in Egypt because of Joseph's favor with God and Pharaoh but ending 400 years later as the forced labor pool of the Egyptians, the POG find themselves slaves in a land not their own.

It is with this people, Israel, that we perhaps most clearly see the POG and who therefore will prepare us to understand most completely the church today. Towards that end, Clowney lines out how we should understand the POG as:

(a) God's Assembly

Using Moses as the focus of His dealings with Israel, God redeemed them from Egyptian Bondageⁱ.

- Dt 4:10 "Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'

What was the purpose of this assembly in the Sinai desert? There the POG entered into a covenant relationship with God promising themselves to Him and He to them as a husband and wife promise themselves to each other in marriage even today.

Not only was Israel God's people in some general and undefined way, but in particular they were to be collectively His son and individually His sons. This can be seen in God's instruction to Moses in Ex 4:22, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is My son, My firstborn.'"

God gave Israel first the tabernacle in Sinai and then the temple in Jerusalem/Zion as the place for them to meet with Him. He came to them in the manifestation of the glory cloud which filled the Holy of Holies; and they assembled to Him there to worship and meet with Him.

In all these ways we can rightly consider Israel, the POG, as the Assembly of God. Secondly, they are...

(b) God's Dwelling

Clowney points out, "God came not only to meet with Israel, but to *dwell* with them."ⁱⁱⁱ God's manifest intention was not only to meet with them from time to time, but more significantly to dwell with them in the ongoing course of their lives.

The location of the God designed Tabernacle and later the Temple at the center of Israelite daily life testified of God's presence with them, His living amongst them.

Although it was a presence shielded behind the sanctuary curtains, it was a presence none the less and one that provided "a way of approach"ⁱⁱⁱ for the POG to meet with Him and atone for their sins and worship Him.

The POG were people with whom God dwelt. Finally we see Israel, the OT POG as...

(c) God's Chosen

I have been speaking of God's dealing with His people, the POG, using the language of God's 'determination' indicating that the POG are the POG by God's determination. Another word Scripture uses speaking of this is, 'choosing.' The POG are the POG by God's choosing.

You have, no doubt, heard this applied to Israel that they were God's chosen people and this is indeed the case.

Speaking to this truth and indicating the reason God chose them Clowney sites Dt 7:7-8 which says,

- "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, but **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."

It is important to note one of God's purposes in choosing Israel. They were chosen for mission. Speaking with Moses from Mt. Sinai, God said in Ex 19:5-6a, "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." That God considers His people priests implies that they represent Him to the other people of the world. This is also seen in

- Psalm 67, "1 God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us-- Selah. 2 That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth. Selah. 5 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 6 The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. 7 God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him."

Laniak says of Israel, the POG, "Through them the world would have a window on God's wisdom and access to his blessing."^{iv} Dt 4:6-8, Amos 9:12; John 10:16

(iv) Israel after David (See next week)

My narrow purpose in looking at these examples of the OT POG at different times in history is to come to understand the POG so that we can understand the church, the current manifestation of the POG. Toward that end we see that in each of these examples there are common elements.

(c) **Common Elements of God's Redemptive Acts**

In each case of God redeeming His people (the POG), we see...

(i) **God** Determining the POG

God is the one who does the work of redemption. The POG are redeemed by God's determination. Never were the POG redeemed because they had earned God's blessing. This

was not Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts earning merit badges. Rather always the POG were recipients of God's grace in spite of their failures.

(ii) **God** Commissioning the POG

- Adam and then Noah were directly charged to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and rule over the rest of creation.
- Abraham carried the promise from God that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. (Gen 12:3)
- Israel was meant to reflect God to the nations. (Deut 4:6-8)

(iii) **God** Redeeming through One Point Man

(a) *Noah*

(b) *Abraham*

(c) *Israel*

(i) Moses

(ii) David

(3) Redemption in Fulfillment

All these acts of redemption, as truly valuable as they were to the POG of their day, actually serve an even greater purpose. Each adds to the Master Painter's portrait of one final global ultimate redemptive act in which one final global ultimate Redeemer redeems one final global ultimate POG.

Let's own this thought in our last point for today about the OT POG and that is that...

e) They **Anticipated** the Final/New POG

The OT POG anticipate the ultimate NPOG

(1) Created POG anticipated fuller POG

(a) Be fruitful and multiply and fill...

Adam & Eve by virtue of their identity as image bearers of God and His mandate upon their lives to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth anticipated a larger body of people – their descendants – being the POG (as they were.)

(2) Estranged POG anticipated Redeemed POG

(a) Head of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15)

Adam & Eve and their descendants would have anticipated the reversal of the curse that prevented them from being the God declaring people they were intended to be.

(3) Redemption of the one nation Israel anticipated final redemption of the global NPOG

f) Conclusion

Today I have labored to do the foundational work (like the digging, grading, base rock, rebar and concrete pouring of the foundation of a house that will never be seen but which must be laid well in order for the house to stand secure over time) upon which we can build our understanding of the house of God that is the church. It may seem a long way off from what is relevant to your daily life but in fact it is very relevant, even essential if we are to understand the church of God's intention.

ⁱ See Jan 3, 2010 Stone Harbor message re: Lord's Supper for a related Passover discussion.

ⁱⁱ Clowney, The Church, p.33

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Laniak p. 93

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