

Exodus 19: 1-25 (KJV)

¹In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai. ²For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. ³And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵Now therefore, **if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant**, then ye shall be **a peculiar treasure unto me above all people**: for all the earth *is* mine: ⁶And ye shall be unto me **a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation**. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. ⁷And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. ⁸And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. ⁹And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

A Holy Nation

OUTLINE

- (1) Pre-requisite (v1-5a)
- (2) Privilege (v5b)
- (3) Purpose (v6-9)

INTRODUCTION

God unfolds for us His purpose in establishing the nation of Israel when He said that they shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. A priest is a representative of God before men. And a kingdom of priests makes the nation a witness to all the nations of the world of the living and true God of Israel. This was the purpose for the establishment of Israel. And the ground work is being prepared with the appointment of Israel's judges for the giving of the constitution for this holy nation, the laws that govern this holy nation.

Deuteronomy 4:5-19 (KJV) ⁵*Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.* ⁶***Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*** ⁷***For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?*** ⁸***And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*** ⁹*Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;* ¹⁰*Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.* ¹¹*And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.* ¹²*And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.* ¹³***And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.*** ¹⁴***And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them***

in the land whither ye go over to possess it. ¹⁵ Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: ¹⁶ Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷ The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, ¹⁸ The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: ¹⁹ And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

The strength of Israel is in her laws. The keeping of the law will exalts this nation. It will be a witness to the veracity of these good laws and points the nations of the world to their Creator God.

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

Israel is instructed foremost to be faithful to their God. They were warned against idolatry to divide their affection toward their God by worshipping the creature more than the Creator. The witness of Israel is for the glory of God that the nations of the world may be directed to worship the living and true God.

God raised the church to be a witness to the world in the last 2000 years to the truth of Israel's God through a remnant of faithful Jewish witnesses in the apostles that Christ chose to be the witness of God's salvation plan for the world through Israel's foremost son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We might believe, He is God, the rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

Romans 1:19-25 (KJV) ¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: ²¹ **Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.** ²² **Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,** ²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. ²⁴ Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ²⁵ **Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**

(1) The Pre-requisite (v1-5a)

¹ In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. ² For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. ³ And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵ Now therefore, **if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, ...**

Notice it was 90 days since leaving Egypt that they reached the wilderness of Sinai. Why is there the urgency to instruct the people of Israel concerning the eternal purpose of their

existence? So that they may be His faithful witness in fulfilling God's good plan of salvation. The uninstructed and unedified mind wanders off on its own in its depravity to mischief. This was the situation with Israel when Moses was up in the mount, the people made themselves a golden calf for worship. Just a short space and God allowed the devil to make in-route into the hearts of God's people. It shows to us how weak and prone we are to stray and depart from God. When we are away from the means of grace, in worship, prayer and Bible study, it is before long, we choose our own way, and forsake the Lord's way.

The pre-requisite for blessing with God is faith and obedience, trust and obey - ⁵ *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, ...*

Why did God allow Israel to stray so far from Him? In fact, the nation turned against their God in a short time. This is to warn us of the subtlety of temptation to deviate. Unless we will put to death the old self and consecrate ourselves to our God, we can fall.

⁴ *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

Israel was reminded of what God has done for them to free them from the bondage of slavery. And as free men, God wants them to cherish their freedom of worship and consecrate themselves to their God. You recall, the reason that Moses gave to Pharaoh to release the Israelite slaves was they may make the journey to a place not polluted with the idolatries of Egypt to worship their God. They are not to forget why they were saved.

We are saved from the bondage of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ that we may be a holy people, a witness to the mercy and goodness of God, that we may be God's true witness and be a blessing to the world by our faith.

Hear the words of our Lord Jesus concerning our need to cleave to Him in fellowship and obedience to His commandments, **John 15:4-11 (KJV)** ⁴ *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* ⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* ⁶ *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* ⁷ *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* ⁸ *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.* ⁹ *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.* ¹⁰ *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* ¹¹ *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

(2) Privilege (v5b)

... then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

The phrase "peculiar treasure" means *valued property, belong to the Possessor of the heaven and the earth*. It is indeed true. We are made in the image and likeness of God. This is our true heritage. We are made to have dominion over God's creation till men fell!

Do not forget your privilege!

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Ephesians 1:3-14 (KJV) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having **predestinated us** unto **the adoption of children** by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷ In whom **we have redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; ⁸ Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; ⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: ¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: ¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: ¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³ In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

You recall our study of the book of Ephesians, we asked? What is the church? What is the purpose for its existence? **A church needs to understand from the very beginning what it is** so that it can know what direction it should be going. The truth is that God is at work in this world, through His church. God's purpose is fulfilled through His church.

Simply speaking, the Church is God's people. The word "church" is from the Greek word "ecclesia" which means "**called out ones**". The term is derived from the root verb "kaleo" which means - "to call". The church is therefore a people called out by God.

A people (1) Chosen by the Father (v1-4), (2) Purchased by the Son (v5-9) and (3) Sealed by the Holy Spirit (v10-14). This is the big picture, the big idea that gives to us the origin of the church

the church is firstly, **a privileged people separated from sin unto holiness** (v1-4) - this is what it means to be "Chosen by the Father".

Israel was separated by God as a holy nation by her obedience to the laws of God. The church too is to be obedient to the words of Christ as His faithful witness.

Secondly, the church is **a purchased people in intimate fellowship with the living and true God** (v5-9) – this is what we mean when we say "Purchased by the Son".

And thirdly, the church is **a protected people destined for heaven** (v10-14) – this is what we mean when we say "Sealed by the Holy Spirit".

It is in Jesus Christ that we have redemption. The word "redemption" means to "buy back" or "ransom". It refers to Christ's death on the cross that paid the price required to purchase the chosen of the Father from the slavery of sin to the freedom of being adopted as the children of God. So, **redemption means that Christ paid the price to free us from the penalty and power of sin.**

Israel was delivered from Pharaoh when God sent the last plague that involves the death of all the first born of Egypt. The unblemished lamb, the Passover lamb that was killed, and the

blood that was spread on the doorposts of their homes spared them from the plague of the death angel.

In Jesus Christ, we are saved from eternal death to be given eternal life. We acknowledge our heavenly Father through prayer, “*Our Father which art in heaven...*” Matthew 6:9. As the missionary Alban Douglas said, “This is our happiest conception of God. Pagan religions know nothing of a God which is a “loving heavenly Father. Pagan religions portray God as immense, terrible, cruel and One to be dreaded. The Bible pictures God as loving, friendly, companionable, approachable and desirable. It was the Saviour who taught us to pray “Our Father” – a new revelation of God... The Jews thought God as their Father in a national or poetical sense.

- (1) Poetical – Psalm 68:5 “*A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, a God in His holy habitation.*”
- (2) National – Exodus 4:22 “*And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, “Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even my firstborn.”*”

Jesus says concerning our privilege as children of God, **John 15:16** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

(3) Purpose (v5b-9)

⁶ *And ye shall be unto me **a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* ⁷ *And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.* ⁸ *And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.* ⁹ *And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.*

Israel is to be a kingdom of priests. Matthew Poole said well, “**A kingdom of priests**; so they are called in regard,

1. Of their exemption and separation from all the people of the world, as priests are taken out of the multitude of men.
2. Of their consecration to the worship and service of God, every subject of this kingdom being in some sort a priest to offer some kind of sacrifices to God,
3. Of their privileges, because God conferred upon them singular honour, safety, and immunity, and liberty of coming near to him, as priests among all nations have been esteemed privileged persons.

An holy nation, purged from the idolatry and other abominations of the heathen world, and separated from them by a avail of partition; allied to me by a holy covenant, and consecrated to my use and service.”

Indeed, God will instruct Israel to establish worship in the building of the tabernacle. Every Israelite is holy in the sight of God, they are to approach Him in holy worship. It is a witness to the nations of the world that they too may come and worship their Creator God.

A day is coming when the world will come to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel, Jesus Christ when He returns to set up His millennia rule on earth.

Zechariah 8:23 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*

Zechariah 8:22 *Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.*

The church shall rule with Christ in the millennia on earth - **Revelation 20:4** *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

Zechariah 8:1-8 (KJV) ¹ *Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,* ² *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.* ³ *Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.* ⁴ *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.* ⁵ *And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.* ⁶ *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.* ⁷ *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;* ⁸ *And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.*

Not many people live to a ripe old age. The prosperous elderly in his old age during the time of the millennium is described here by Zechariah. The elderly today carrying a staff or “tongkat” is not a common sight. But in the millennium, it will be a common sight. To live to the ripe old age as Mahalaleel (830 years old) or Methuselah (807 years old) or Lamech (782 years old) is a future reality in the millennium.

Every Israelite will be a believer in the millennium, a partaker of millennial blessings. There will be no terrorists or Skud missiles to deal with. Today, countries in the world are gearing up for an aging population from the baby boomer generation, many elderly care centers are being set up to care for the needs of an aging population. In the millennium, the elderly are cared for by our Lord Himself.

Jerusalem will be greatly enlarged by God’s intervention and creation, the streets will be bursting at their seams, full of young people playing in the streets. The streets are not terror-stricken where people are demonstrating to topple an incompetent government, but the old man shall sit gazing on the scenes of peaceful beauty before him, with his aged companion by his side, to enjoy with him the refreshing breeze that comes cool and sweet from the distant sea. Before him and around him are the merry shouts of children playing in their happy childhood.

Such a picture strikes the Jewish mind with peculiar force. There is peace and prosperity and the presence of God in their midst (v 8). True blessedness can only come when God is the

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Ruler. True blessedness can come to the Christian today when God is his Ruler. God's Word is the blueprint for a blessed life right here and now. Are we appropriating it? They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.

CONCLUSION

May the LORD bless His good word to strengthen and comfort and energise His people to be good witnesses for Him. Amen.