

THE MISSION/DESTINY OF GOD’S PEOPLE: the means to the end of accomplishing this mission.

PREVIOUSLY we learned about the COVENANT God established with his people and the mission or destiny he gave them whereby the good news of God’s plan of salvation would be brought to all people.

“I will bless you...

...and you will be a blessing...

...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12: 2, 3)

These promises were first given to Abraham and later inherited by his descendants.

TODAY we will learn of three blessings God gave to Israel/the seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob which were to be the means to the end of accomplishing this mission. Israel was God’s ‘chosen ones’. The WHY of Israel’s election remains a mystery, but the CERTAINTY of it is clear. They were a people set apart.

READ: Exodus 19: 5-6

Deuteronomy 7:6

(Picture: ring encircles [larger] figure)

- In both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the word for HOLY means to ‘separate for God’s purpose. A second meaning is ‘having great value/worth’ due to being separated for God’s purpose.
- The root word for ‘holy’ in the Greek is also found in the word ‘saint’ (which is what the Bible calls all believers), and is found also in the word ‘sanctification’ (the process of becoming more Christlike).
- Holiness is a very major and foundational concept in the Bible and it is grounded in God himself who said, “You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.” (Leviticus 19:12)

THREE KEY MEANS TO BE AND BRING ABOUT THE BLESSING/DESTINY

1. A land to be possessed

(Picture: land scene, lower left)

- a. Remember: these were a nomadic people. The people of God were to have a space in which to live; soil that they could call their own, ground on which to build a kingdom.
- b. There is something almost magnetic about land. Why?
- c. What is the struggle today in the Middle East?
- d. READ: Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 26:2&3; 28:4; 35:12; 48:4; 50:24
- e. Their destiny was tied to that land – as long as they would obey.

2. **Seed that would be numberless** (Picture: people scene, middle)
a. READ: Genesis 15:5b; 22:17b; 28:1b; 17:6b)
3. **Separation:** “Go from your country and your kindred, and your father’s house...”
(Genesis 12:1). Abraham went. (Picture: ring encircles [lesser] figure)
- a. **Ethnic separation.** God demanded there be no intermarriages between Israelites and non-Israelites. Any and all things which would encourage an assimilation of deadly pagan principles into Israel’s way of life were denounced.
- b. **Separation within the family**
- c. **Geographic separation.** READ: Genesis 46: 2-3

Election/being chosen by God is always to a purpose.

- We are saved for service, not to hoard our blessings.
- Separation is *from* the world – *to* God – for service back in the world.
- Separation does not mean not valuing persons or rejecting persons because they may be ‘outside’ the faith (they are persons for whom Christ died).

Questions:

- Is the separation principle still necessary today; didn’t Christ take care of such matters?
- How do we help our children understand the matter of separation in a world where the lines are so blurred; how do we live with the separation principle guiding our choices?
- In later studies we shall see how things that were instituted to be a ‘means to an end’ become ‘ends in themselves’. What does this mean?
- We shall see Israel remembering the promise of the covenant, but forgetting the obligations which accompanied those promises.