

# Apple of His eye

Privilege invariably entails obligation. Because of His love for *all* nations, God chose *one* nation to serve as a model for others to follow. The story of that special calling lies at the very heart of the entire biblical message. As Jesus is mankind's only Saviour and Lord, Abraham its paragon of faith, Israel is its unique servant in the flesh. Her consistent abysmal failure to fulfil her obligation will soon fade into history. Jesus will help her carry her unique burden.

**When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.<sup>1</sup>**

**Deuteronomy 32:8**

**W**HAT A STAGGERING PROPOSAL. God scattered the nations after the flood in accordance with a pre-determined scheme. Like the instruments in an orchestra being arranged so as to most effectively work in with the first violin, the final resting place of the various ethnic groups was based on the future population, and presumably location, of Israel<sup>1</sup>, foreseen but not born. Note what the New Geneva Study Bible says of the above verse from Deuteronomy:

God is sovereign over all of world history, but world history itself is ordered in the interests of God's plan of **redemption** for His chosen people Israel.

God planned in advance for special geographical requirements the elect nation would need to fulfil her special calling.

What did God have in mind when He decided to set Israel apart from all other nations as His chosen vessel?

## Israel's unique election

Election is a primary theme in the Bible. God

has seen fit in His infinite wisdom, motivated by saving love, to choose the nation of Israel for a special purpose:

*But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend (Is. 41:8).*

God chose Israel as His special people, "above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6) in Abraham's time. The promises made to him contain, in germ, His purpose and plan for all mankind. Miraculously short on words, these promises encapsulate the whole purpose and plan of history. They have been, and will continue to be, fulfilled off and on throughout history. Consummation, or complete fulfilment, will occur during Jesus' millennial reign and in the kingdom of God. Consummation is achieved as a result of a pre-ordained plan whose elements are also to be found in those same promises, the key one being the election of Israel. She was called not for her own sake, but to serve as a channel of God's blessings and gifts to all mankind, as promised in Genesis 12:2:

*I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.*

Abraham and his multiple seed were to be used as an agent of God's blessing on all mankind. (This promise is distinct from the one in Genesis 12:3 that all nations would be blessed in Abraham's one seed, Jesus Christ.)

<sup>1</sup> Though some students prefer the rendering "sons of God", referring to angels, in place of "children of Israel", the latter makes much more sense.

## Jesus confirms Israel's uniqueness

Everything Jesus did and said supports the validity of Israel's election. His confession of Matthew 15:24 — "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" — hardly comports with the notion that Israel was about to lose her exceptional status. Throughout his ministry Jesus perpetuated the notion of Israel's election in numerous side comments, such as in Luke 13:16, 19:9, Matthew 19:28, and 23:37. Note his intriguing promise in Matthew 10:23:

*When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

Jesus' assurance that God's main focus of gospel preaching during the church age would be among the peoples of Israel supports the contention that God's interest in Abraham's descendants has never ceased.

In light of the evidence that God loves all peoples of all nations, what good purpose could be served in choosing one particular nation? In what ways is Israel to serve as a channel of God's gifts to mankind, a blessing to all nations?

## Channel of blessing

Israel was elected for the express purpose of *ministering to all peoples on the face of the earth*. Note Exodus 19:6, a key passage concerning the covenant made with Israel at Sinai:

*And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

Israel is to act as a nation of priests, figuratively speaking, to her fellow communities around the world. Sadly, she failed this specific old covenant phase of the promises miserably, and the whole world festered many years in the dungeon of spiritual darkness. Jesus' coming radiated brilliant light in the midst of that darkness; the church and Israel are now to reflect that light, each in its

own way in its own time.

Isaiah 61:6 spells out plainly what God yet intends for Israel:

*But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, they shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast.*

This crucial verse shows the intended ideal arrangement between Israel and the nations. It consists of a cooperative, mutually-respectful, and loving alliance, in which each nation, like the colours in the spectrum of pure light, contributes its part to the whole. God's way is one of mutual blessing. In due course, theory and practice will merge. Gentiles will provide Israel with material goods. In exchange, Israel will minister to their spiritual needs. The plan will succeed.

## Success assured

Jesus will return, and Israel will finally shoulder and discharge her special commission to be a light to all nations. Far from making up a divinely-ordained spiritual aristocracy created for self-indulgence, Israel has been called to serve; and serve she will:

*And it shall come to pass that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing (Zech. 8:13).*

Though Israel in the past quickly perverted this godly intention into a self-serving form of nationalism, in the Millennium she will bow to God's purpose, setting an example of God's way in action to be copied by all.

We conclude with a majestic Scripture that brings out the very essence of the purpose behind Israel's election:

*You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God (Is. 62:3).*

Israel will glorify God. It won't be long now.

**Jesus came to die for all mankind, not just Israel. Though he alone is man's ultimate high priest and mediator with God, he has enlisted assistants to aid him in his glorious plan for man. Not only will perfected saints rule with Jesus at his return, converted Israelites will also help carry the message of reconciliation and salvation through faith in Christ to all mankind. It's about time Israel fulfilled her calling.**