

Deuteronomy 26:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

Analysis

And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made—God's purpose for Israel was exaltation among nations, not political dominance but moral and spiritual preeminence. **In praise, and in name, and in honour**—the Hebrew lit-hilah, ul-shem, ul-tif'arah (לִתְהַלָּה וּלְשֵׁם וּלְתִפְאָרָה) means for praise, for fame/reputation, and for beauty/glory. Israel's distinctiveness would attract nations to worship Yahweh (see Isaiah 60:1-3, Zechariah 8:23). **And that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken**—the ultimate purpose: holiness, separation unto God and reflection of His character.

This promise conditioned on obedience (note the context of 26:16-17). Israel's elevation wasn't automatic ethnic privilege but covenant consequence—obedience brings glory, rebellion brings shame (see Deuteronomy 28). Tragically, Israel's disobedience made God's name contemptible among nations (Ezekiel 36:20-23). Yet the promise finds ultimate fulfillment in Christ's church, a multinational holy people displaying God's character (Ephesians 2:19-22, Revelation 5:9-10).

Historical Context

Spoken circa 1406 BC as motivational conclusion to covenant stipulations. The promise echoed God's intent stated at Sinai: 'You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:6). Israel's subsequent history showed repeated failure—idolatry, injustice, and rebellion led to Assyrian conquest (722

BC) and Babylonian exile (586 BC). Only in Christ does God create the truly holy, multinational people this passage anticipated, the church purchased by His blood from every tribe and nation.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's calling to holiness differ from self-righteous superiority or ethnic pride?
2. In what ways has Israel's failure and the church's mission fulfilled God's purpose for a holy witness-people?
3. What does it mean for Christians to be a 'holy people' displaying God's character to the nations today?

Interlinear Text

וְלִתְתָּבֵן	עַלְיָהָוּ	כָּל	עַל	לִתְתָּבֵן	אֲשֶׁר	בְּגּוּיִם
And to make	thee high	H5921	H3605	above all nations	H834	
H5414	H5945			H1471		
עַש	ה	לִתְהַלֵּה	מ	וְלִשְׁמָה	רִתָּה	עַם
which he hath made		in praise	and in name	and in honour	H1961	people
H6213	H8416	H8034	H8597	H1961	H5971	
קָדֵשׁ	לִיהְיוֹת	ה	אֱלֹהִים	רָאשׁ	אֲשֶׁר	
and that thou mayest be an holy	unto the LORD		thy God	H834		
H6918	H3068		H430			
דָּבָר:						
as he hath spoken						
H1696						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:1 (References God): And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

Deuteronomy 7:6 (Holy): For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

1 Peter 2:9 (Holy): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Isaiah 62:12 (Holy): And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

Exodus 19:6 (Holy): 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.

Jeremiah 33:9 (Resurrection): And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

1 Peter 2:5 (Holy): Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Zephaniah 3:19 (Resurrection): Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

Psalms 148:14 (Holy): He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

Jeremiah 13:11 (Resurrection): For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

