

Deuteronomy 4:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.

Analysis

Israel's election is grounded in God's redemptive act—"brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt." The 'iron furnace' metaphor depicts Egypt's cruel bondage and suffering, yet also God's refining purpose (cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7). The purpose clause 'to be unto him a people of inheritance' reveals divine election: God chose Israel not for inherent merit but to be His treasured possession. The Hebrew 'nachalah' (inheritance) indicates permanent, covenantal relationship. This prefigures New Covenant election where God redeems His people from sin's bondage to be His prized possession (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9).

Historical Context

Egypt's oppression of Israel (Exodus 1-12) included forced labor making bricks, infanticide, and systematic brutality—the 'iron furnace' of affliction. God's deliverance through ten plagues, Passover, and Red Sea crossing demonstrated His sovereign power and covenant faithfulness. This exodus became Israel's defining redemptive event, constantly rehearsed in worship and teaching (Psalms 78, 105, 106). The exodus typifies Christian redemption from sin's bondage through Christ, our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the 'iron furnace' of Egypt demonstrate that God often uses affliction to prepare His people for redemption and inheritance?
2. In what ways does Israel's election as God's 'people of inheritance' prefigure the church's position as God's treasured possession in Christ?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| וְאֶתְכֶם | לְקַח | נָהָרָה | וַיִּצְאָה | אַתֶּךָ |
| H853 | hath taken | But the LORD | you and brought you forth | H853 |
| | H3947 | H3068 | H3318 | |
| מִרְכָּה | לְקַרְבָּן | מִמִּצְחָה | לְעַמָּךְ | |
| furnace | out of the iron | even out of Egypt | to be unto him a people | |
| H3564 | H1270 | H4714 | H1961 | H5971 |
| בְּנֵי | וְתָהָרָת | בְּנֵי | לְעַמָּךְ | |
| of inheritance | as ye are this day | of inheritance | to be unto him a people | |
| H5159 | H3117 | H2088 | H0 | |

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 8:51 (References Egypt): For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron:

Jeremiah 11:4 (References Egypt): Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

Deuteronomy 9:29 (Parallel theme): Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

Deuteronomy 32:9 (References Lord): For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

1 Peter 2:9 (Parallel theme): 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:

Titus 2:14 (Parallel theme): Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.