

Exodus 19:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

Israel's threefold identity:

1. a kingdom (מַמְלֶכֶת, mamlekhet)—God reigns over them
2. of priests (כֹּהֲנִים, kohanim)—they mediate between God and nations
3. a holy nation (גֹּי קָדוֹשׁ, goy qadosh)—set apart for God's purposes.

This isn't just positional status but functional calling: Israel exists to bring the nations to God, to be His priests to the world. Peter applies this exact language to the church (1 Peter 2:9), showing the church inherits Israel's mediatorial mission. Priests stand between God and people; Israel stands between God and nations; the church continues this priestly-missionary calling.

Historical Context

In the ancient world, priests were specialized intermediaries. For an entire nation to be 'a kingdom of priests' was revolutionary—democratizing priestly access while maintaining Israel's unique mediatorial role among the nations.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does your identity as part of a 'royal priesthood' (1 Peter 2:9) shape your mission in the world?
2. In what ways should the church fulfill Israel's calling to mediate God's presence to the nations?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה	יְהוָה	לִי	מִמְלָכָת	וְגוֹי	כֹהֲנִים
H859	H1961	H0	H4467	H3548	H1471
And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests nation					
וְשָׁ	אֵלֶּה	הַדְּבָרִים	אֲשֶׁר	תְּדַבֵּר	אֵל
H6918	H428	H1697	H834	H1696	H413
and an holy These are the words which thou shalt speak					
בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל				
H1121	H3478				
unto the children of Israel					

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 5:10 (Kingdom): And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on 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:

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.

Revelation 1:6 (Kingdom): And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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.

Deuteronomy 28:9 (Holy): The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

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.

Deuteronomy 26:19 (Holy): 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.

Leviticus 19:2 (Holy): Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

Romans 12:1 (Holy): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.