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| golden-lampstand-clipart-12.jpg | 宣教查经系列#一  我们是跨域的族类!  郑璧卿牧师字 2023年3月26日 |

宣教就是奉三一真神的名跨越众领域的界线去宣扬祂的拯救，跨越的领域包括疆土、文化、语言、宗教等。

在新约时代，教会领受了大使命到世界各个角落去宣扬耶稣基督的福音。在旧约时代，神虽然没有差遣以色列到外邦国家去宣扬耶和华，但在救恩历史中我们却看到神的百姓不断地在跨越各种领域；比如亚伯拉罕从美索不达米亚的吾珥移居到巴勒斯坦的迦南，雅各带着家人从迦南迁居入埃及的巴珊地，四百三十年后又从埃及迁居入迦南，近七百年后被掳到巴比伦地寄居。

在每一次的跨越，神的百姓进入一个陌生的文化，与存敌意和诱惑性的信仰。对亚伯拉罕而言，迦南地充满暴力，比如人看见美貌的女子，就会杀了她的丈夫将她占为己有；又如雅各的子孙从埃及正要入迦南时，就被当地凶猛的巨人惊倒。每一次跨越都要面对一个同样的仇敌：偶像祭拜与淫乱。

在《申命记》4:5-9，神藉着摩西提醒以色列人他们是耶和华拣选的见证人。 以色列务必将自己与周围的偶像祭拜和邪恶的文化分别开来，遵行神的律法，单单敬拜耶和华神，不能妥协。若是这样，以色列国必强大富足。以色列智慧而公正的律法、彻底消除贫困的经济政策、使社会凝聚力强的教育体系和道德标准，以及百战百胜的国防建设必受到列国的仰慕。他们必来向以色列讨教求问，从而归向以色列富足的源头——耶和华神。

「地上的万族都要因你得福…我眷顾他，为要叫他吩咐他的众子和他的眷属，遵守我的道，秉公行义，使我所应许亚伯拉罕的话都成就了。」创12:3，19:18

原来，神为以色列所做的一切，以及通过以色列所做的一切，并不是单为拯救以色列，神乃是从世界万民中重造一个委身于耶和华和祂的公义的族类！在旧约里，神并不是差以色列去改变外邦人的宗教，乃是将所拣选的以色列栽植在外邦中，做公义的榜样，和真理的光。换句话说，以色列是为万民得救而存在！

这不正是我们的召唤吗？「你们是世上的光。城造在山上，是不能隐藏的。」（太5:14）弟兄姐妹们，宣教不是教会的事工，**宣教是教会的本质，是教会仍然还在地上的缘故！我们就是新约里跨域的族类！**让我们走出舒适的圈子，勇敢跨入神为我们打开的福音门，越过各样“不同”，高举福音真光！

We Are a Crossing People!

*Wrtten by Rev.Zheng on 26 March 2023*

Mission is crossing boundaries to proclaim salvation in the name of the LORD, boundaries of all kinds, such as geographical, cultural, linguistic, religious...etc.

Unlike Christians who are commissioned to ***go*** out to the world to proclaim the Gospel, in the Old Testament time God did not instruct Israel to ***go*** to make conversion of the gentile nations. Nonetheless throughout the history of salvation, we saw God led His people to move across various boundaries from time to time, such as Abraham migrating from Ur to Canaan; Jacob and his family moved to Egypt and settled there; Israel departed from Egypt after 430 years and lived among the Canaanites. About 700 years later they crossed over to Babylon in exile.

In each crossing the people of God enter an environment that was culturally foreign and religiously alluring. For Abraham, the land of Canaan was filled with violence and uncertainties. For example, when they saw a beautiful woman, they would kill the husband and seize her. When Jacob’s descendants came out of Egypt and entered Canaan, they had a cultural shock when they first saw giants in the land. Wherever they went, one hostility was constant: idolatry, which was accompanied with sexual immorality.

Being called to be a testimony for Yahweh as stipulated in Deuteronomy 4:5-8, Israel was to set herself apart from the idolatry and depraved culture surrounding her. Their loyalty towards Yahweh and His way of righteousness is not to be compromised. In doing so, the surrounding nations would be amazed at Israel’s legislation that provided social justice, the economic policies that eliminated poverty completely, the education system that fosters high moral standard, and the national defense that empowered her to conquer every invader! And they would seek the source of Israel’s prosperity - the LORD God.

This is the missional intent of God for Israel. It was clearly stated in God’s words for Abraham “*for I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”* (Ge 12:3)

Thus, all that God did in Israel, for Israel and through Israel is to be understood in relation to God’s salvation work for the entire mankind, not just for Israel. You see, God is re-creating a community of people who are committed to Him and His righteousness and justice. God chose Israel and planted her amidst the nations to be a model for justice and a light of Truth. In other words, Israel exists for the sake of the nations!

Is this not the call of the Church today? *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.”* (Mat 5:14) Mission is not just an important ministry in the church. **Mission is why the church is still on earth. The church is Christ’s mission!** Even so,let us step out of our comfort zone, enter every door that the Lord opens for us, cross over every ‘difference’ as we hold up the light of the Gospel!