

A The Origin of Nations:

❖ **The first nations.**

- Because of their sin, Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden and forbidden to enter it. They and their descendants continued to come to the entrance to Eden, guarded by the cherubims, to offer sacrifices to God.
- In this way, humanity, for a time, continued to recognize God as its supreme ruler.
- When, because of the prevailing wickedness, God decided to destroy the Earth with the flood, he also removed the Garden of Eden. After the flood, men like Nimrod decided to create their own states outside of God, ruled by themselves (Gen. 10:6-12.)
- Nimrod is said to have been “a giant hunter against the Lord” (Gen. 10:9 LXX.) Among the cities he built were Babel and Nineveh, from which nations sprang that were declared enemies of God’s people.

❖ **A nation begotten by God.**

- Genesis 10 uses the Hebrew word *goyim* to refer to the nations. This same word is used to refer to the Gentiles, that is, those who are far from God.
- In order to recover those nations, God decided to bring forth a new nation, Israel, through the descendants of Abram/Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3.)
- Why choose Abraham? Gen. 18:19. In this way, God could show the world what happens when we let ourselves be led by Him.
- He gave them just standards that would astonish the nations, causing them to desire to come into contact with Israel to imitate it, and thus receive the blessing that God desired to impart to them (Deut . 4:5-8.)

B The Chosen People:

❖ **The history of Israel.**

- Unfortunately, instead of wanting to be an exemplary nation, led directly by God, Israel wanted to be like the other nations (1 Sam. 8:5.)
- By asking for a king, they rejected God (1 Sam. 8:7.) Even when warned of the consequences of having a king, they persisted in their rebellion (1 Sam. 8:9, 19.)
- Knowing in advance this reaction of Israel, God had dictated laws that, if obeyed, would ensure that the requested king would remain as close as possible to God's ideal (Deut . 17:14-20.)
- Despite this, even the best kings had great flaws. Most of them are said to have done evil (1 Kings 11:6.)
- After all, they were sinners ruling over sinners. For that reason, there is no righteous government except the one to come, the Kingdom of God (Dan . 2:44.)

❖ **The history of the Church.**

- After Israel's apostasy, Jesus instituted a new people: the Church. But this people was not to have a king or a specific nationality. Those who governed it were to do so by serving others (Mt. 20:25-28.)
- During a 300-year persecution, the Church remained more or less faithful.
- But freedom arrived. Constantine (4th century) legalized Christianity. And he became its "unofficial" ruler! He presided over congresses and issued laws governing the Church.
- In the 5th and 6th centuries, the Church relied increasingly on the state, and the Bishop of Rome gained greater authority. Service was no longer the norm of government.
- Throughout the Middle Ages, anyone who did not obey the authority of the Church had to pay for their rebellion with death, torture, or imprisonment.
- The Church thus made the same mistakes as the people of Israel.

❖ **The role of the chosen people.**

- How could Israel have been “a light to the nations” (Isa . 42:6)? How can the Church be “the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14)?
 - (1) Through his obedience (Deut . 4:6; Matt. 5:16)
 - (2) Showing the solution to sin (Lev . 4:27-29; Jn . 3:16)
 - (3) Announcing the Second Coming of Jesus (Is . 40:9-10; Rev. 14:6-11)
- The historical reality of God's people has been that of a people who have failed to accomplish the work God had designated for them.
- Yet the world has been blessed, through Israel and the Church, with the blessed message of Salvation.
- We are living in the final stretch of history. The last opportunity to fulfill our purpose of being the light of the world, of proclaiming God's salvation (Isa . 52:7 .)