

# What Is Your Mission?



Week Four

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Acts 7:20–36

### IDENTITY BEFORE MISSION

A pattern emerges in the creation account of Genesis 1: first God identifies what He is creating, and then He gives its purpose or mission. First He called out the light, which, divided from the darkness, was to demarcate the day from the night. The identity of what He was creating (i.e. the firmament) was established before He elucidated its purpose (i.e. to divide the waters from the waters).

Given the sequential manner in which God creates—the light before the plants, and the plants before the animals, for instance—it becomes apparent that He is intentional. God already knows the purpose of His creation and creates with that purpose in mind. The pattern of introducing the identity of the creation before its purpose is maintained throughout the chapter. We may deduce that God intended for the reader to recognize that identity precedes mission.

Before we are introduced to Adam and Eve's mission to “be fruitful, and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion...” (Gen. 1:28), we are introduced to their identity (Gen. 1:27) as beings created in the image of God. This differentiates their mission to “be fruitful and multiply” from that given to the sea creatures and winged fowl (Gen. 1:22). Whereas the mission is limited to physical fruitfulness and multiplication for the fish and birds, it has intellectual and spiritual implications for humans who are created in the image of God.

Mission cannot be understood fully until identity is understood. By the same token, a misidentification will lead to a mischaracterization of the mission. Put differently, we do not know what we should be doing if we do not know who we are.



**inScribe**

Write out Acts 7:20–36 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Acts 7:35, 36. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Acts 7:20–36. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What are the fears that keep you from pursuing your goals?

Are you more easily swayed to abandon your mission by fear of discomfort or by the promise of greater comfort in disobedience?



Read more at [www.inverseible.org/will4-3](http://www.inverseible.org/will4-3)

**BORN A CRIME; RAISED A PRINCE**

Intimidated by the fortitude and multiplication of the Jewish people, Pharaoh orders the annihilation of every male child born to a Jewish woman. Amram and Jochebed, unfazed by the directive, manage to preserve their newborn in their home undetected for three months. They knew that the 400 years of Israel’s affliction were drawing to a close and would have anticipated that God would soon raise up a deliverer. Perhaps this was to be their baby’s destiny. Fueled by hope and possibilities, these Jewish parents defied their circumstances and overcame the fear of repercussions to save their child’s life (Heb. 11:23).

When they can no longer safely keep him in the house, Jochebed crafts an ark that she places, with the baby inside, at the river’s bank. By divine providence, Pharaoh’s daughter discovers the ark and, at the suggestion of the baby’s sister who was watching nearby, she ends up hiring the baby’s mother to care for him until he turns twelve. What prayers must Jochebed have uttered as she placed her baby in a basket into the water! And what a remarkable answer to prayer—not only was her son’s life spared, but she was afforded the opportunity to raise him in the fear of the Lord!

Not a moment of those twelve years were wasted. It was all the time Jochebed had to ensure that her son was grounded in his history and confident of his destiny. If we were more aware of the reality that tomorrow is not promised, how much more diligent would we be in making the best use of our time today? Moses’s primary concern at the age of twelve was not how well he could play the video games of his day but how to remain true to his identity as part of God’s chosen people in spite of the temptations that would surround him in Pharaoh’s house.

Within the space of the formative twelve years of his life, Jochebed had so managed to ingrain in Moses an identification with God’s people that “when he became of age, [he] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin” (Heb. 11:24, 25). So well-grounded was he in his identity that no palatial luxuries could induce him to reject his mission, nor could the prospect of discomfort dissuade him from fulfilling his purpose.

## INGREDIENTS OF IDENTITY FORMATION

The following three elements contribute to the formation of our identity:

### Continuity

Our history forms the foundation of our identity. At a biological level, we are connected to our forebears, and learning about their lives in the past helps us understand ourselves better in the present. We may discover an innate proclivity that runs through our families or better comprehend the nature of an inherited conflict between ourselves and others. Often, our history offers answers to the “why” questions related to our identity, thus equipping us to accept those things that we cannot change and courage to challenge those things we must change.

### Uniqueness

When we think about identity, it is most often in the context of uniqueness—what makes me different from everyone else? Physical markers like unique fingerprints support our intuition that we are unlike anyone else who has ever existed. The individuality of the Persons of the Godhead provide another indication that being created in the image of God entails a uniqueness to our individuality (see Gen. 1:26, 27).

### Affiliation

Finally, we draw a sense of identity from the social groups we belong to (family, church, community, nationality). In these groups, our ideas about meaning and purpose are refined, challenged, and sometimes even created. Once again, the unity of the Godhead intimates that we were not created to live in isolation—humanity was intentionally created as a community of male and female; distinct but affiliated.

We may look to Scripture for an understanding of our history, individuality, and communality at every level of our lives: the micro (our individual selves), meso (familial), macro (communal), and global aspects of our identity.



**inTerpret**

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What answers does the Bible provide about the continuity, uniqueness, and affiliation aspects of your identity?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/will4-4](http://www.inverseible.org/will4-4)

What Is Your Mission?



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

- Exodus 2:11-14
- Exodus 3:9-4:14
- Hebrews 11:23-27



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Acts 7:20-36?

Review your memorized verse from Acts 7:20-36.

## WHO MADE YOU?

Before Jesus embarks on His mission, God affirms His identity. “And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (Mark 1:10, 11). Leaving His baptism, Jesus retreats to the wilderness for a forty-day period of fasting and prayer, after which the devil’s angle of attack is on His identity: “If You are the Son of God . . .” (Matt. 4:6).

The devil’s attacks on Christ’s identity did not end with the wilderness encounter. Through human agents, the enemy continued his onslaught on the identity of Christ, attempting to insult Him with the slur that He was an illegitimate child (see Mark 6:3; John 8:41). Incidentally, Jesus experienced the social stigma attached to those who are born outside of the traditional family structure—if that describes you, know that Jesus understands.

All of these attacks on His identity, however, did not sidetrack Jesus. In a dramatic encounter recorded in Luke 12:13, 14, He responds to a request to mediate a dispute between brothers with a question: “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?” (KJV). As noble or as urgent as the man’s cause may have been, Jesus’ mission was not determined by the circumstances that surrounded Him. So firmly grounded was His identity in God that He would not confuse other people’s emergencies with His mission. Ultimately, He rejected society’s attempts at defining Him.

Whereas Moses was shaken by the question “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” (Exod. 2:14), Christ overcame the very same assault on His identity. His confidence in His identity created boundaries for what His mission on earth entailed. Think about it—Jesus could have tackled climate change, human trafficking, gender inequality, and so on. These are all important causes, and the corpus of Scripture testifies that God cares about all of them; but they did not fall into the immediate scope of Christ’s mission on earth. So while we may find hints in His teachings and conduct of what He would have said about these issues, Jesus did not devote the Sermon on the Mount to addressing these things. He knew who He was, had nothing to prove to anyone, and stayed on mission.



inVite

Where do you see Jesus in Acts 7:20–36?



How is Jesus like Moses, as well as unlike him?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/will4-6](http://www.inverseible.org/will4-6)

What Is Your Mission?



Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

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After this week’s study of the chapter, what are personal applications you are convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications you must make in your public and social life?



Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at [www.inverseible.org/will4-7](http://www.inverseible.org/will4-7)

**WHAT A MAN IS**

“Younger than Joseph or Daniel was Moses when removed from the sheltering care of his childhood home; yet already the same agencies that shaped their lives had molded his. Only twelve years did he spend with his Hebrew kindred; but during these years was laid the foundation of his greatness; it was laid by the hand of one little known to fame.

“Jochebed was a woman and a slave. Her lot in life was humble, her burden heavy. But through no other woman, save Mary of Nazareth, has the world received greater blessing. Knowing that her child must soon pass beyond her care, to the guardianship of those who knew not God, she the more earnestly endeavored to link his soul with heaven. She sought to implant in his heart love and loyalty to God. And faithfully was the work accomplished. Those principles of truth that were the burden of his mother’s teaching and the lesson of her life, no after influence could induce Moses to renounce.

“From the humble home in Goshen the son of Jochebed passed to the palace of the Pharaohs, to the Egyptian princess, by her to be welcomed as a loved and cherished son. In the schools of Egypt, Moses received the highest civil and military training. Of great personal attractions, noble in form and stature, of cultivated mind and princely bearing, and renowned as a military leader, he became the nation’s pride. The king of Egypt was also a member of the priesthood; and Moses, though refusing to participate in the heathen worship, was initiated into all the mysteries of the Egyptian religion. Egypt at this time being still the most powerful and most highly civilized of nations, Moses, as its prospective sovereign, was heir to the highest honors this world could bestow. But his was a nobler choice. For the honor of God and the deliverance of His downtrodden people, Moses sacrificed the honors of Egypt. Then, in a special sense, God undertook his training” (*Education*, 61, 62).

“What a man is, has greater influence than what he says. The quiet, consistent, godly life is a living epistle, known and read of all men. True character is not something shaped from without, or put on; but it is something radiating from within. If true goodness, purity, meekness, lowliness, and equity are dwelling in the heart, the fact will be manifest in the character; and such a character is full of power.

“The officers who were sent to take Jesus reported that never man spake like this man. But the reason of this was that never man lived like this man; for if he had not so lived, he could not so have spoken. His words bore with them a convincing power, because they came from a heart pure and holy, full of love and sympathy, beneficence and truth. There is eloquence beyond that of words, in the quiet, consistent life of a pure, true Christian” (*Gospel Workers* [1892 ed.], 243, 244).



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What does the command to be fruitful and multiply mean for your intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life?

If nothing could stop you, what would you dream of accomplishing for God?

Is there a situation in your life right now that seems as impossible as the likelihood of baby Moses living through Pharaoh's death decree on all newborn boys? What are you doing about it?

Do the people closest to you understand your God-given mission? Why or why not?

How do you define yourself? Where do your ideas about yourself originate?

To what extent should our families and societies shape our identities?