

Peculiar People #2

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.”

Deuteronomy 14:2

Last time we looked at the scriptures which taught that God’s people are to be a “peculiar people.” For example, Titus 2:14 says, “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Peter adds, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession ...” (1 Peter 2:9). In contrast with the world, the faithful Christian is very peculiar. We do not do as the world does. Our interest in worship, Bible study, preaching, teaching, etc., will conflict with the world. This makes us peculiar. Being peculiar does not mean strange or deformed in a negative fashion, but simply different. Certainly we are not curious and stubborn for the sake of differing with others. Our religion makes us peculiar. In contrast with the Sadducees and Pharisees, Christians in the first century were peculiar. The apostles were right and those differing with them were wrong. In Acts 15, they were even peculiar when compared with Judaizing teachers in the church.

There is much in common among the denominations of the world. There is hardly a distinctive peculiarity held by any one group. Name any doctrine you wish, and as a rule, that very point is taught by other bodies also. We too hold much in common with most of our religious neighbors. We alike believe in the inspiration of the scriptures, the virgin birth of Christ, His miracles, His death for our sins, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the Father, and that He is coming again to raise the dead, judge the world, and reward all according to their works. All of us believe in godly living, deeds of benevolence, etc. Yet there are fundamental points on which we differ. This makes us peculiar people.

As compared with most religious bodies, we are distinctively peculiar in having no creed, discipline, manual, articles of faith, and such like, other than the word of God. The Bible is our only creed. Since we are not under the law of Moses, the New Testament is our rule of faith and practice. In this book God has “given to us all thing which pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). The Bible furnishes the man of God for all good works (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Man-made creeds are much of the basis of contention. They are sectarian, each one being made for a party or sect, while the New Testament is not a sectarian book. Therefore, we propose to speak where the scriptures speak, and to be silent where the scriptures are silent (Deuteronomy 4:2; 1 Peter 4:11; 2 John 9). In this we are scripturally peculiar.

While many of our religious neighbors are thanking God for division and denominationalism, we are praying for the unity of all who believe on Him (John 17:20-22; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 4:3). We say there were no denominations in the days of the inspired apostles and ought to be none now. This would not be a problem if it were not for a general departure from the apostolic doctrine

and practice. Therefore, we call upon all to come back to the Bible as an all-sufficient guide in matters of religion, and to the New Testament church built by Christ. This would bring about scriptural unity without compromising a single Bible truth or principle. The only problem with this view is that it makes us “peculiar people.” The question before us is will we have the courage to be “peculiar people?”

As compared with those around us, we are distinctively peculiar in teaching that conversion is brought about by the word of God or the gospel of Christ. Romans 1:16 says that the gospel is the “power of God.” We do not pray for God to send down “saving power” because the gospel already has this power and we already have the gospel.

We also teach that faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism are terms of pardon to alien sinners. Jesus put salvation after baptism when He said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter placed remission of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit after baptism when he said, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Preaching the same today will make us peculiar.

We are also distinctively peculiar in partaking of the Lord’s Supper upon the first day of each week, as did the early Christians in the days of the apostles. Acts 20:7 says, “And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread ...” Many denominations will only partake of the Lord’s Supper once a month or even once a year. Because the Bible commands us to partake of it every first day of the week, we are going to be peculiar.

We are distinctively peculiar in having no mechanical instrumental music in our worship. We simply sing. We do not add instrumental music to New Testament worship because that does not please God. He has told us what to do in worship (Matthew 26:30; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Worship has to be within the realm of truth, for Jesus said in John 4:24, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

We are very peculiar in speech. Since the following expressions are not found in the Bible, we do not use them, as do our religious neighbors — “Get religion;” “Pray through to the Holy Spirit;” “Join the church of your choice;” “The sacrament;” nor do we refer to the church as another “denomination” or call our preachers “Father,” “Reverend,” or “Pastor.”

Religion is something which must be practiced (James 1:27)! Men are to repent and baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Instead of joining the true church, we read that “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:41-47). Instead of the “church of your choice;” we read that there is only one body or church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4). Instead of “Pastors,” “Fathers,” “Reverends,” “Committees,” “Councils,” etc., each church has a plurality of elders and deacons with evangelists which help in carrying out the work of teaching and preaching (Acts 6:1-7;

14:23; 20:17, 28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-13). Under the Old Law, Saturday was the Sabbath, but Christians are commanded to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We are not commanded anywhere to keep the Sabbath under the New Covenant. Because of this undenominational stance, we are only members of the Lord's body, or church, as were the apostles and early Christians.

All these elements make us quite peculiar to the religious world. Let me remind you that I do not wish to be peculiar just for the sake of being peculiar. I take my stand upon the word of God and am able to show my beliefs from that same word. We ask nothing more than for those who are doubting what they believe to consider what God's word has in it. One has to consider all of God's word. Deuteronomy 14:2 says, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." False teaching begins with mishandling the Bible. We beg you to not make that mistake. Obey the Lord because you believe in what He says and can prove it! That will make you peculiar, but it will also grant you eternal life.

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