

The BEACON

Published by the Newton church of Christ
Meeting at: St. James Church Rd and Glendale Ave

Vol. 22, No. 10

Edited by John Cripps

OCTOBER, 2008



The People of God (I PETER 2:9) by Carl Gilbert.

Peter describes the people of God as a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye (we) should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you (us) out of darkness into his marvelous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Pet. 2:9-10.) These terms would immediately be recognized by any Bible student as Old Testament terms originally applicable to the Israelite nation who was formerly regarded as the "chosen of God." (Isa. 43:20-21.) Today Christians are regarded as the true Israel of God. (Rom. 2:28-29.)

Let us briefly investigate Peter's description of the people of God.

A Chosen Generation (ASV—Elect Race) —

To what and how are we elected? This same verse says that we are elected to show forth praises unto God—called out of darkness into light. In times past we had no inheritance, but now we are the children of God—had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. In verse 21, Peter says that they had been called. How are we called or elected to salvation? Paul said that we are called through the Gospel of Christ. (2 Thess. 2:14.) In Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Matt. 11:28, we are told that the Gospel is for all – every creature. Does this mean that all will be saved or elected? No, only

those who through an obedient faith appropriate God's blessings. (James 2:14-26.) Thus, those who comply with the word of God make up this elect race.

A Royal Priesthood

We are a priesthood because of our right to officiate in worship. (Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5.) — A royal priesthood because of our relationship to the King. (Eph. 2:19.)

A Holy Nation

Children of God are holy because of the divine purpose for which they stand. They are a nation because the great company to which Christians are joined is a monarchy with Christ as its head. (Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:18.)

A Peculiar People

(ASV—A people for God's own possession) — This simply means that we as Christians belong to God in a very special way. The word possess literally suggests something that has been acquired. Thus, Christians are the acquired treasure of God, preserved and kept by the power of his word. This sets Christians apart from the world and from strange religious beliefs not found in the Word of God as a peculiar or different people. This is not in the sense of

disfiguring one's self or acting in some strange way in order to appear different, but different in the sense of having been purchased (acquired) from something to something and for something — purchased from sin and Satan's kingdom to Christ and His kingdom (Col. 1:13)— purchased for the purpose of praising and glorifying God. Many times the people of the Lord's church are called peculiar or different. I consider this quite an honor in that this is the description God gives us. Today we are different because we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent. This is what the Bible teaches. (1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18-19.)

We teach that baptism is for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) In so doing we become different from other religious beliefs, but we are in line with the teaching of the Bible. We teach (from the Word of God) that Christ's name is the only name to be worn. (Acts 4:12; 11:26; Rom. 16: 16.) In so doing we are called narrow minded. Why? We are a "different" or "peculiar" people. We teach that instrumental music is excluded from the worship of God's people. (We are commanded to sing and not to play. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12.) In this we are a different or peculiar people.

We partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week because every week has a first day. This is the sure way. (Acts 20:7.) Again, in this, we are peculiar from other religious people.

Thus, on and on, we see that God's children (those who have heard and believed the Gospel — Rom. 10:17; repented of their sins — Rom. 10:17; confessed their faith in Christ— Matt. 10:32-33; and have been baptized for the remission of sins— Acts 2:38) are different from the people of the world and those who profess strange beliefs because Christians use God's

word only as their standard of faith and practice. It is an honor to be different.

SIN IS NO BARGAIN

A real bargain means good value received. Let us see if sin offers a real bargain.

1. By sinning Adam and Eve received a luscious fruit—"good for food," and "pleasant to the eyes." (Gen. 3:6.) When God had told them not to eat of this tree, he was not being harsh, or severe, because he had given all the other trees Of the garden for their use. But when they disobeyed, and ate of the forbidden fruit, they had to pay a fearful price for their sin. They paid for this fruit with their innocence. "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." They paid for this fruit with their relationship with God, for they endeavored to hide themselves from the presence of God. They paid for it with their relationship with each other, for they tried to pass the blame for their wrongdoing from one to the other. They paid for it with their happiness, with their prosperity, with their comfort, with their lives, with the lives of all their posterity (Rom. 5:12), and possibly with their souls. (Mark 8:36.)

2. By sinning Lot's wife received one last look at a wicked city. (Gen. 19.) For this she paid with her life and her relationship with her family. In warning of the judgment Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:32.) Looking back can turn out to be a very costly sin. The children of Israel in the wilderness looked back and cried for the fleshpots of Egypt, instead of looking forward to the land flowing with milk and honey. Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62.)

3. By sinning Achan received a garment he could

not wear, and silver and gold he could not spend. Read Joshua chapter 7. For this he paid with Israel's shame and defeat, with all his possessions, with his life, and with his family's lives, for they all were stoned with stones and burned with fire.

4. By sinning David enjoyed another man's wife. The story of David's sin with Bathsheba is found in **2 Samuel 11 and 12**. For this sin he paid with shame, and a perpetual blot on his name, with the life of an innocent child, with trouble in his own family, and sorrow again and again.

5. By sinning Judas Iscariot received 30 pieces of silver, which he could not find occasion, or conscience, to use. (**Matt. 27:3-5**.) By betraying Christ he gained 30 pieces of silver, which he thought he wanted, but when once the evil deed was done, something hindered his enjoyment of it, and he threw the money down, and went out and hanged himself. What did he gain by sinning? Thirty pieces of silver. But he cast these away. What did he lose? His peace of mind, his apostleship, his great opportunity to do good as a servant of Christ, his good name, his privilege of sitting upon the twelve thrones with the other apostles and judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and his soul. (**Acts 2:24**.) Satisfying lustful appetites and covetous desires may take only a few minutes in the life of a person, and yet bring to that person sorrow and woe throughout life, and even throughout eternity. If Adam and Eve, Lot's wife, Achan, David, Judas could have called back, and omitted from their lives, the few moments they gave to sin, how different their lives would have been. For those few, little moments of sin they paid a dear price, and so will it be with all who transgress God's great laws. "The way of the transgressor is hard." (

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Prov. 13:15.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (**Gal. 6:7, 8**.) "For the wages of sin is death." (**Rom. 3:23**.)

There are two ways by which we can keep from paying the cost of sin. First, we can stay as far away from sin as possible: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (**1 Thess. 5:2 2**.) But, other than Christ, no man has lived the sinless life: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (**Rom. 3:23**.) Second, we, as people guilty of sin can come to Christ in obedience to the gospel, God's power to save. (**Rom. 1:16**.) We can come by faith, for faith is "unto righteousness" (**Rom. 10:10**); by repentance, for it is "unto life" (**Acts 11:18**); by baptism, for it is "into Jesus Christ," "into his death." (**Rom. 6:3**.) In his death he shed his blood, and concerning him Paul said, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." (**Eph. 1:7**.) Becoming new creatures in Christ, we rise to walk in newness of life. (**Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:17**.) Then as long as we live we should strive to follow the steps of him "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (**1 Pet 2:22**.) Surely, since the wages of sin are so high, no one can afford its momentary satisfactions and pleasures.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR



I saw a sign the other day on a bill board that read - "If you have taken the wrong road and you realize it - understand that God allows U-Turns." Yes indeed the merciful God we serve knows we will make mistakes and thus gives us a chance to **REPENT!**