

A Very Peculiar People

The Bible teaches that God's people are to be a peculiar people. But the Scriptures do not teach that this peculiarity is to be manifest by our peculiarity of dress, nor by a rejection of modern means of farming, travel, manufacturing, etc. in favor of the types used in the past century.

"*Peculiar*" is from a Greek word that means "purchased." It means that which is specifically selected for one's own use. Therefore, when we are redeemed by Christ, we belong to God. Among the peoples of the earth, God has a special group that belong to Him, having been purchased with the blood of Christ, I Pet. 1:18-19. Out of this concept there grows many responsibilities and blessings. Notice some points of peculiarity.

Peculiar In Our Obedience to God

Before the law was given to Moses, God made a promise to Israel: "*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine,*" Ex. 19:5. The Lord shows that this peculiarity is contingent on obedience to His voice. It had nothing to do with their apparel, style of dress, etc. Notice: "*And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandment,*" Deut. 26:18. The peculiar aspect of God's people will be seen in their humble submission to His revealed will.

The Christian must know God and obey His will. "*And hereby we do that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar; and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him,*" I John 2:3-5. One does not know God who does not conform to His will. Only those who have wholly obeyed His will know Him in His saving power.

Peculiar In Zeal for Good Works

Paul states that Christ "*Gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,*" Tit. 2:14). A lack of zeal for good works indicates a failure to understand fully the purpose of Calvary which is set forth vividly in this verse. "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,*" Eph. 2:10. God has ordained that Christians should walk in good works, and this is a very distinguishing mark. In this we follow the Master, "*Who went about doing good,*" Acts 10:38. The majority of men are not so disposed, but the Christian walks in the steps of Jesus. In this he shows the peculiarity God intended.

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord said, that this peculiarity is to be seen by the world: "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,*" Matt., 5:16. One evidence of the worth of Christianity that a skeptical world cannot discount, mark down, nor deny is a life of good works shown by a Christian. This peculiarity the world will never hold in contempt. "*Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas, they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation,*" I Pet. 2:12. This peculiarity is far more

than the worldly minded understands.

Peculiarity in Our Walk In Light

The apostle Peter wrote, *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar people**, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous **light**,”* I Pet. 2:9. The various things said in this verse about disciples of Christ should cause them to exert themselves to the utmost to live up to the great honor and responsibilities bestowed upon them. This peculiarity is shown in that God’s people have been separated from the darkness of the world, and now walk in the light of God’s truth. *“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,”* I John 1:7. The Christian is peculiar in that he walks in the light, and his deeds are done in the light, rather than in darkness. *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,”* 2 Cor. 4:6. Christians, in their relationship with the world, act as though they belong to the Lord in a peculiar sense — that we belong to Him and no other.

Peculiar In Speech

The peculiarity of the Christian is noticeable in his **speech**, which is *“seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man,”* Col. 4:6. He does not curse, lie, rail, murmur, or complain. *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may render grace to the hearers,”* Eph. 4:29. His speech is pure because his heart is pure. *“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,”* Matt. 12:34. A Christian must not swear, use slang expressions, listen to questionable stories, if he to remain in God’s favor. There is a great need to control or order what we say. Consider the prayerful request of David, *“I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my **tongue**; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me,”* Ps.39:1. With the tongue we can speak beautiful words, evil words, comfort someone or discourage him, downgrade a person or lie about them, praise God or deceive ourselves and others, with its use or misuse. Let us therefore, strive to use language that is proper and communicate ideas that build up instead of tear down.

The Affections Are On Things Above

The Christian is peculiar in that he is willing to give up much of this world to inherit that which will be his after while. He hears Jesus say, *“Lay not up for ourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in **heaven**,”* Matt. 6: 19-20. Therefore, his affections are not on things of this world but on things above, something this world cannot offer. *“Seek those things which are **above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things **above**, and not on things of the earth,”* Col. 3:1-2. The Christian lays up for himself a good foundation that he *“may lay hold on eternal life,”* I Tim. 6:19. The world may find this very peculiar, but the Christian delights in serving the Lord.

Peculiar Because Of His Aim In Life

While others live for time, the Christian lives for **eternity**. There is a hope that separates him from his associates. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,”* I Peter 1:3-5. While others live for time, the Christian lives

for eternity. His head is lifted above many temptations because he looks to a glorious reward for faithful allegiance to God. Since he is striving for heaven his interests are not on this world, leading to sinful pleasure and evil deeds. Jesus said, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also,”* John 14:2-3. The Christian recognizes that he has been *“bought with a price,”* I Cor. 6:20. Thus he lives not for just the present; but wisely uses the present to safeguard the future.

Let us resolve to do our best. Jesus said, *“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say,”* Luke 6:46. He is saying, why do you admit My right to rule, and lay down the law for you to obey, and yet you do not the things which I command? This is an emphatic warning to make our profession and practice agree. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain,”* I Cor. 15:58. At the end of this earthly life, may the Lord say, *“Well down thou good and faithful servant.”*

By Everett Hardin

It won’t work! Someone said: “Our generation is trying to drink its way to prosperity, destroy its way to plenty, war its way to peace, hate its way to love, sin its way to God, and to drift its way upstream.”

“A great mind is always a generous one.”