

## 4. God's Peculiar People

By John Thiel, *Seeking to Please God Series*, [mp3](#)

*Scripture reading: 1 Peter 2:9 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 marvellous light:*

We are seeking to please God as God's peculiar people. This series we have been pursuing is to reinforce our appreciation of the judgment hour message, and to place before our minds that in the time of the judgment in which we are living, as in the Day of Atonement in the Hebrews' era, we are to search our hearts.

We are living in the time of the judgment, and we are to do deep heart-searching. The first angel's message of Revelation 14:6-7 announces the everlasting gospel and then it opens up before us something which we want to dwell upon:

**Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**

This is a message that is to be proclaimed, and that *has* been proclaimed for many years now. Ever since 1833 this message was proclaimed with power. And the call was to give God glory, because the hour of God's judgment is come. As we ponder on this for a moment, what really does it mean to *give God the glory*?

### Giving God the Glory

"In that day" "the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, . . . shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." Isaiah 10:20. From "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will "worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." They will free themselves

**from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God's mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:6, 7, 12. {PK 299.3}**

From this qualification of “giving God the glory” you can see what is actually to be done during this hour of God’s judgment. We are to turn from every idol that binds us to the earth. This requires heart searching. And this is precisely what we are counselled to do—to search our hearts deeply to see where it is that I am bound to this earth by some idol that I have in my heart, and to remove that, and free myself from every entanglement. This requires heart searching. I am to ask where I am still entangled, so that I can free myself of this and give God the glory.

**By the first angel, men are called upon to "fear God, and give glory to him" and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" {LHU 342.3}**

**The question of deepest interest to each one should be, Am I meeting the requirements of the law of God? . . . Only by a close examination of self in the light of God's Word can we discover our deviations from His holy rule of right. . . . In Him we may have pardon for past failures, and in His strength grow up to be perfect men and women in Christ Jesus. {LHU 342.4}**

Here is the weight of the meditations that we are pursuing as we go through this series of self-examination, to see whether or not I am giving God glory in my life, and to fulfil what God requests of us during the judgment—that we should do deep heart searching and repent of everything that may still be recorded against us. And there is this beautiful statement: *In Him we may have pardon for past failures*. So the pardon is there; we are called to examine ourselves so that this pardon continues for the things we have not yet found pardon for.

## **The Call to God's People**

The challenge, the call, to give Him the glory is what God presented to the Hebrews of old; and the language for the Hebrews, for Israel of old, is precisely the same He holds to us today. So we want to discover that as we do this search

about God's peculiar people and the call He calls us to to give glory to Him. He says here to Israel in the wilderness:

**Exodus 19:4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and [how] I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.**

I have brought you from Egypt unto Myself, says He.

**Exodus 19:5 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: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These [are] the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.**

Here is the sovereign majesty of God and His power to redeem the Hebrews from Egyptian captivity, to bring them unto Himself, to make them His special treasure, so that they would give God the glory through their response to His activity to them. *Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*, He says, *a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people*. What a high calling; what a privilege was given to the Hebrews.

This was repeated several times to them; we read it once more and let it expand in our understanding, permitting God's word to touch our personal selves as well, because this is what it is leading to. This is what God had called upon them to sacredly engage in in a covenant:

**Deuteronomy 26:16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: 18 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 commandments; 19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.**

Can you see? *Fear God, and give glory to Him*. I want you to be My people, He says to Israel, that you may be a praise, *and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God*. I want you to be My peculiar treasure, He says, and to stand before the other nations giving Me glory, bearing witness that I am the Lord that has brought you out of Egypt, and that I am the Lord that is making you holy.

## Development of God's Mercy

As we take to heart these words and we think of what a privilege He gave to the Hebrews, the Israelites, I ask you, What did they do with that? We know, sadly, that they failed miserably. And when you reflect on how He led them after that, after all those years of trying to give them their opportunities to be this special people, they didn't do exactly what He said. And having arrived in Canaan, they were permitting the Canaanites to still affect their life; and eventually they began to want a king like other nations, when *God* was their King and He wanted them to give Him the glory; but He went their way and raised up King David and used him as a wonderful instrument for His glory. But again, serious mistakes were made. So God comes to the point where, after all the lines of kings that have dishonoured His name, He finally lets them be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar; and there, in Babylon, a few people would give Him the glory. But they, after their captivity, were to be released back to their homeland, and God wanted to raise them up again, to give them another opportunity. So Jesus came to them as their Saviour to give them this privilege, but still they turned against Him and crucified Him. So what was God going to do?

**Hosea 2:23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to [them which were] not my people, Thou [art] my people; and they shall say, [Thou art] my God.**

So He turns from the Hebrews and turns to people who were never given that privilege and opportunity and says, I will say to you, You are My people. What I said to the Hebrews I now say to you, *Thou art My people*; and you will say, You are my God. You and I, we today, are in precisely the same position as were Israel of old. You and I, if we receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, are privileged to be addressed as were the Israelites. Through the gospel this privilege is expressed to those that were not His people. He says, *I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy*—the Gentiles, anyone who would receive the gospel.

**1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.**

Hadn't the Hebrews tasted that? On eagle' wings He brought them out of Egypt; the Lord was gracious to them. He has also brought us out of the world.

**1 Peter 2:4 To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built**

**up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**

*By Jesus Christ* the gospel was to be the agency by which these people would come into existence. Now comes the continuation:

**1 Peter 2:9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;**

Can you see the similarity to what He said the Hebrews then? He is saying exactly the same now to the gospel Christians;

**1 Peter 2:9 ...that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 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.**

Can you see a direct reference to the scripture of Hosea? The language that God used with the Israelites is the language that He is now addressing us with. I want you to be My peculiar treasure, He says; you are now My people; don't do what the Hebrews did; open your heart to what I am doing for you. Give God the glory.

As we search our hearts in this hour of God's judgment to give Him the glory, we are illuminated by the counsel to Israel to give Him the glory, so "*that ye should show forth the virtues [margin] of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.*" To show forth the virtues, doesn't that mean to give Him the glory? Precious privilege.

## How to Give Him the Glory

Now we see that we are called upon to give Him the glory; and how is this to be done?

**Deuteronomy 26:16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:**

I have shared with you the word of God that applies to you and me today. Here it is: You and I are called upon to give God the glory by keeping His statutes and judgments, keeping them *with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. To keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His voice.* We live today in a Christianity that chooses the things that are written in the

Bible that they want to accept, and the other things that they don't want to accept they pass by. And they are not actually with all their hearts listening to God's voice; they are just choosing God's statements that they want to go with. But the other things, no. But here is the key to the whole thing: we are to examine our hearts, and examine closely to follow God's statutes, judgments, and commandments, hearing His voice, doing what He is saying to me. *Doing* it—this is what it means to give God the glory. This is what He said back then, and this is what He is saying to us today.

So our research is to examine the statutes and the judgments as we search our hearts.

**The question of deepest interest to each one should be, Am I meeting the requirements of the law of God? . . . Only by a close examination of self in the light of God's Word can we discover our deviations from His holy rule of right. {LHU 342.4}**

And this is the purpose of our messages in this series; that we actually examine ourselves *in the light of God's word*, so that as we examine the word of God about His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments, we are examining whether or not I am meeting those requirements. And as I examine and discover that in some way or another I am not meeting them, I am to come in confession and repentance and change my course.

## His Statutes and His Laws

**Deuteronomy 4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do [them],**

Not just to study them just to know; but *for to do them*,

**Deuteronomy 4:1 ...that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.**

Now notice the strong challenge that He places before modern-mindedness today. He says, You study these laws that I have taught you, to do them. And then He says:

**Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish [ought] from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.**

Don't do what so many theologians and so many Christians of today do, picking out certain things that you can agree with, and diminishing the things that you don't agree with. You are listening to God's voice; we are examining our

hearts according to the word, and we are not to twist the word to accommodate our discomforts.

**Deuteronomy 4:5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do [them]; for this [is] your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations,**

Fear God, and give Him the glory *in the sight of the nations*,

**Deuteronomy 4:6 ...which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation [is] a wise and understanding people. 7 For what nation [is there so] great, who [hath] God [so] nigh unto them, as the LORD our God [is] in all [things that] we call upon him [for]? 8 And what nation [is there so] great, that hath statutes and judgments [so] righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? 9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;**

Can you see the challenge that God keeps on adding to the appeal that we should be the people He is calling for here? Many people read this and say, Yes, that was for the Israelites. But according to the words of 1 Peter 2, it is for *us*. According to Revelation 14:6-7, we are to give God the glory so that the people who see us can say, Yes, these people really have a law which would make a very peaceful world if everyone were to follow it. We are to give God the glory, as were the Jews and the Hebrews meant to be doing.

## The Levitical Laws that God Gave

We are to let the Spirit of Prophecy clarify to us the importance of all the laws that God gave them—the statutes and the judgments.

**We are to become familiar with the Levitical law in all its bearings; for it contains rules that must be obeyed; it contains the instruction that if studied will enable us to understand better the rule of faith and practice that we are to follow in our dealings with one another. No soul has any excuse for being in darkness. Those who receive Christ by faith will receive also power to become the sons of God. {1BC 1110.4}**

I don't have to add any word here, do I? We are plainly instructed by the Spirit of Prophecy that we need to become familiar with the Levitical laws that God gave to the Hebrews. And what are we to do? They contain *rules that must be obeyed; it contains the instruction that if studied will enable us to understand better the*

*rule of faith and practice that we are to follow in our dealings with one another. And no soul has any excuse.* When I was commencing this series, I mentioned to you, “You need to search this out; but if you give me the right, I will do my best to search it out a bit for you.” But I am not going to take over your responsibility; I am going to just keep on pointing to certain points. And here we have a clear point that tells us that, in our research of examination of our hearts to see whether we are giving God the glory, whether our character in heaven, as it is being examined, is going to pass the test, we are called upon to examine ourselves in the light of His word. And here the direction given us is that the statutes and the laws and the judgments that God gave to the Hebrews contain *rules that must be obeyed. It contains the instruction that if studied will enable us to understand better the rule of faith and practice that we are to follow in our dealings with one another. And no soul has any excuse for being in darkness.* This is the call of the Lord for us to give Him the glory.

So here we have the pointer: We are to make our studies in the statutes and laws, the Levitical law, in which we will find, by examination, whether or not I am living up to all those instructions. There are instructions there that are metaphorical; and we don't have to do those symbolic things anymore because they were fulfilled in Christ. But within the symbolic sacrifices that were made, there are also rules and standards that we are adopt in embracing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And there are other laws, laws of morality in relation to one another. I will simply give one now as a conclusion just to give a pointer as to what is contained even in the small little details that connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us examine together.

What follows is one of those things that have a very vast enlargement for us to pursue. Among those sundry laws we find this:

**Leviticus 19:19 Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.**

This is one of those laws, one of those things that God asked for us to hearken to. Listen to My statutes, He said; listen to My voice; follow My counsel. If you will do this, you are My peculiar treasure. As I said, this is just one of these things; there are myriads of others in these Levitical laws. Study them closely to see where you are practising, or failing to practise, this.

It says that if we had animals we were not to gender them with other breeds. The interbreeding between one kind of cattle to another was forbidden. And when you are growing your crops, you are not to let them interbreed either. And then comes this one in regards to our garments: *neither shall a garment min-*

*gled of linen and woollen come upon thee.* We will let the pioneers help us to understand this. Haskell's enlargement of these things is beautiful. In his book he makes reference to the passage above and says:

**Garments were ever taken as an emblem of the righteousness of Christ, and when different substances, as linen and wool, were mingled, it spoiled the figure.** —S. N. Haskell, *Prophetic Waymarks*, p. 345.

We are to be God's peculiar people, and in our garments, in our dress, in the things that we do, we are to represent before the world, even in figure, the righteousness of Christ. Garments were taken as a symbol of the righteousness of Christ, and when different substances, *as linen and wool*, were mingled, it spoiled the symbol. Today we have substances like viscose and polyester; we have different garments that have different varieties of fibre mingled together as one. But God's people are not to partake of this, because it has a practical impact upon the mind; and it has a meaning by which we are to give God the glory.

In his other book, *The Cross and Its Shadow*, Haskell says this:

**Part of our life cannot be clothed with the "filthy rags" of our own righteousness, and the remainder with the pure, spotless robe of Christ's righteousness.** {1914 SNH, CIS 275.3}

We can't have part of mine and part of His.

**We cannot serve God in our home and church life, and serve mammon in our daily business life. The one who continues doing it will never enter the kingdom of heaven. "We can not serve God and mammon."** {*Ibid.*}

**The Saviour taught the lesson that we can not patch our own filthy robes of self-righteousness with the righteousness of Christ. "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new *agree not with the old.*"** {1914 SNH, CIS 275.4}

**The Israelite who conscientiously refused to mingle woollen and linen in his daily garments, and saw in it the lesson God designed to teach, would also refrain from sin. His entire dress, made of but one kind of cloth, would constantly remind him of the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness, given to the faithful.** {1914 SNH, CIS 275.5}

God gave an instruction—we are not to mingle different fibres into one garment—to remind us of the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness given to the faithful. There is much to be considered in the counsels and statutes of God's word that carry a spiritual context.

## Dress and Character

We understand very well that our character is referred to as garments; and God has a perfect photograph of every man's character, and that character is to be absolutely purified so that there is no mingling of self and God in it, but it is all just one fabric.

**The dress and its arrangement upon the person is generally found to be the index of the man or the woman. {CCh 180.4}**

Because if the man or the woman is a child of God, they will follow the instructions of God's word, and they will reveal in their dress and its arrangement upon the body the kind of person they are, giving God the glory. As it says, the natural man regards the things of God as foolishness, but God's children are not going to listen to the natural man; they are going to follow and hear the voice of God that gives the instruction that you are not to mingle different fibres into one cloth. That is the way it is. And when we submit to these kinds of details, it reflects in our demeanour, and in our spiritual mentality; it will show whether I am trembling at God's word, or whether I am careless with God's word. Very simple.

So the Lord is standing before us in this last hour message, and saying, I want you to be My peculiar people; I want you to be My holy nation, My treasure; give Me the glory. And as we examine ourselves in the light of His word, in the light of His statutes, we are to let Him have us altogether and give Him the glory.

It is my prayer that we will do this in our personal research; and as I share week by week different aspects, that we will listen to those statutes and judgments *for to do them*, so that we will demonstrate the tenor of our hearts—as it says, the clothing is *an index* of a person. What sort of a person are we? Are we the children of God, or are we the children of the world? God grant us a willing heart to receive this.

Amen.