

LEST YE FAINT

by

S. Franklin Logsdon

Pastor, Moody Memorial Church, Chicago, Illinois

Copyright @ 1949

CHAPTER SIX

THE DISTINCTIVE DIVINE DIFFERENTIATION

“The Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptian and Israel” (Exodus 11:7).

DEFINITION IS THE SIMPLEST form of exposition. It not only indicates the class to which a person, place or thing belongs, but fixes the position of the same within the class. The Bible is prolific on the subject of ethnology and has much to reveal concerning the divisions of mankind into races. All of these races are the people of God’s hand, but not all are called the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3). We will find interest in observing how the Lord turns the spotlight of Scripture upon a certain people and sets them apart for Himself.

The Position of the People of God

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE

Choice with Deity is more than arbitrary selection. It is the establishment of an object upon which God can fix His love, for love must have an object. When the object is chosen, the love of God overlooks the deficiencies with patience, overshadows the weakness with power, and overflows the requirements with profusion.

The choosing of the Lord is utterly incomprehensible. He does not look for merit in man because it is not discoverable in him, insofar as commending himself to God is concerned. Every choice He deigns to make but magnifies His transcendent greatness, for **“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty”** (I Corinthians 1:27).

Thus, the Israelites did not come into divine favour because they were more numerous than the other races. **“Ye were the fewest of all people”** (Deuteronomy 7:7), they were forcefully reminded. Then, in unmistakable plainness and directness, the reason is revealed: **“Because the Lord loved you”** (Deuteronomy 7:8).

Nor can the Church find any other reason for its position, privilege and prospect in the divine economy. He commended His love toward us when we were despicably in sin and desperately without hope (Romans 5:8).

Love is the answer. Love is the pen which writes the names of all ransomed ones indelibly in the family record above (Luke 10:20).

Love is the welcome which receives us as cherished children into the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE A SPECIAL PEOPLE

“The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

The word **“special”** is as choice as it is rare. It means *to shut up securely* as jewels and precious treasures are protected, or to embrace as the breast encloses the heart. **“They shall be mine, said the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels”** (Malachi 3:17).

Yes, the people of God are His jewels. But more impressive still is the intimation in the above definition that the people of God are in the bosom of the Father, gathered unto His heart and contained in His affections as the heart is held within the breast of man.

This is how our life is **“hid with Christ IN God”** (Colossians 3:3).

THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE AN EXALTED PEOPLE

“Chosen . . . a special people unto Himself” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

The people are not chosen *for*, but rather *unto* the Lord. The word **“unto”** is used twice in this one verse. Its importance is clear.

Our faith in the provisions and propositions of the Lord does not merely set us apart for Him but brings us unto Him. This speaks of nearness, attachment and relationship, and embodies all the profound aspects of the doctrine of reconciliation. It indicates that the distance has been dissipated and the difference obviated, all because the disqualifying disease (sin) has been expiated.

It is wonderful how God can take a poor lost sinner, save him from his sin, set him free, and then elevates him to a position in **“heavenly places in Christ Jesus”** (Ephesians 1:3).

Compare this with Jehovah’s invitation to Moses, **“present thyself there to me in the top of the mount”** (Exodus 34:2), and you will more clearly understand Hebrews 11:39. **“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise. God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”**

That “**something better**” gives us the exalted privilege of being “kings and priests unto God” (Revelation 1:6).

The Possession of God in His People

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself” (Deuteronomy 14:2).

Here is divine affection of infinite capacity concentrated upon an elective nation. It is as though Jehovah in His transcendent power and excellent glory deigned to bend over the parapet of heaven and whisper to the hearts of these ancient people that they were *exclusively* His—His very own. It is a tender statement that throbs with pronounced desire for their undivided devotion.

THEY WERE PECULIARLY HIS BY PURPOSE

“I have created him for my glory” (Isaiah 43:7).

This is something of a rocketing revelation which transports us with abruptness into supernal realms. We cannot pursue this information to its ultimate meaning, but we can, be our vision ever so dim, see the direction in which it takes us. Nor should we lose sight of the identification here. The early-part of this chapter gives us the salutation of Jehovah: **“O Jacob . . . O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee”** (Isaiah 43:1).

We know, therefore, to whom He was speaking. And why were they redeemed? For His glory.

Let it not be imagined that the Omnipotent God was so impoverished that it became necessary for Him to supplement His holy requirements by calling upon a race of humankind, fewest in number of all, to be His own dear people.

The Lord Jesus spoke of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), explaining that this glory was synonymous with the Father Himself. It is His own nature, inherent and effulgent. Fulness requires no addition.

In one of the last scenes depicted in the Sacred Volume, we observe the uselessness of the sun and moon in the city eternal in the heavens, for the glory of God will illuminate it (Revelation 21:23).

Eternity itself will prove the undiminishableness of His glory. No, His purpose in separating an earthly people unto Himself was not supplemental in Character. It was objective in design. He wanted human hearts in which to shed His love abroad (Romans 5:5).

He preferred earthen vessels as a repository for His treasure that the excellence of His power might be made manifest (II Corinthians 4:7).

Faith stands with firm affirmation of the fact of God’s purpose and exclaims with jubilant appreciation,

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

THEY WERE PECULIARLY HIS BY PLAN

Faith could not ask for a more pleasant engagement than to sit back and witness the unfolding of Infinite plans. With all the precision and inexplicable wonder with which the Unseen Hand unfurls the smiling beauty of the rose, turning back petal by petal with meticulous care, even so the indomitable purposes of God come to fruition with accuracy and timeliness (Isaiah 14:27-28).

Concerning the people whom the Lord God bore on eagles' wings and brought to Himself (Exodus 19:4), we will find it both interesting and profitable to consider His calling of them, His covenant with them, and His care for them.

We are forced, however, by space limitations and present purpose to bypass the historical details relative to the romance of Israel. We will content ourselves in this treatise with a few terse but authentic confirmations of the relations of God and His people. We must tread softly as we come before the tender truth of His outflowing affection. **“I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine,”** He reveals. **“Thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee . . . fear not: for I am with thee”** (Isaiah 43:1, 4, 5).

This is a heart-claim upon a people and a heart-covenant with them. But that is not all: He shows abounding interest in all their concerns. **“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee . . . when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned”** (Isaiah 43:2).

“Water . . . fire!” Israel found these to be more than figures of speech, as have we all. They are real waters—swirling, dashing, turbulent waves—an actual tempest to inundate plans, to uproot happiness, and to submerge faith and hope. And the fires? They too are real. The flames are hot at times, but they can do no more than consume the dross and purify the gold when the Master of all problems is WITH us. The plunge into the waters and fires may be sudden, but the promise is that we shall pass through. Not only that, but we shall have the divine Paraclete with us as we journey. We are peculiarly His.

THEY WERE PECULIARLY HIS BY PROVISION

Of all the great convocations of other days and our own, none has been more vividly reported than the rally at Shechem in 1427, B.C. Joshua summoned a cosmopolitan company, consisting of elders, judges, officers and the heads of Israel, to rally before him just prior to his decease (Joshua 24:1).

Rising to the fullest height of his persuasive ability, he laid upon the conscience of their hearts a challenge of timely importance. He delineated in their hearing instance after instance of the goodness and the grace of the Almighty. He cited at least fifteen historical experiences where Jehovah intervened on behalf of their ancestors, supplying them with protection.

He recalled that the Lord had given them a land for which they had not laboured, cities which they had not built, and vineyards which they had not planted. All of these divine blessings proved God's interest in and His love for those whom He called to be His people.

Joshua's point of appeal emphasized the serious need for rededication of body, soul and spirit to the Lord. If Israel was a peculiar people unto the Lord, even more is the Church God's *Peculium*. Comprised of both believing Jew and believing Gentile, it is the body of Christ.

The Purity of the People of God

“Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 14:21).

Since the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism contends that the above verse is in direct contradiction with the words, **“For there is no respect of persons with God”** (Romans 2:11), we ought to clarify our minds with regard to the text.

Professor Mason of Cambridge translates the verse: ***“Ye shall not eat any carcase; shouldest thou give it to the sojourner who is in thy gates he would indeed eat it; or shouldest thou sell even to the foreigner he should not object to buy; but thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.”***

This is a masterful differentiation.

BEING THE PEOPLE OF GOD DEMANDS PURITY

It is not what others claim or do that sets the standard for the people of God; it is what He desires of their devoted hearts. Why should the sojourner within the gates of Israel object to eating the flesh of an animal which has just fallen dead? Why should the foreigner have scruples against buying a lamb that has just succumbed, especially if the price seemed right? What the sojourner and the foreigner did, was one thing; what God's people did was quite another. They were holy unto the Lord, and His law called for abstinence from these things.

Quite frequently people, outside that sphere of blessing into which grace has so sweetly brought us, seek to tauntingly harass the people of God. “Why, there is no harm in this or that,” they contend, little realizing that, as water and oil will not mix, even so godliness and ungodliness are equally non-mixable.

By **“ungodliness”** we do not necessarily mean that which is indecent or vile. We mean that in which God is not found, the entering into which would fail to bring Him honour. Being the people of God makes the difference.

The Jews were not expected to criticize the foreigner and the sojourner for their behavior; they were simply reminded that they themselves were **“an holy people unto the Lord.”** Their position dictated their policies and procedures. They were governed by holy laws which did not

appertain to the nations, the keeping of which brought them into divine favour—their faith in which was counted unto them for righteousness. We, too, as Christians, are governed by distinctive decrees which have no practical application to the world of men at large. Of course, they will do many things without the least compunction of conscience, and why not? But we are an holy (separated) people unto the Lord. That is the difference.

BEING THE PEOPLE OF GOD DENOTES PURITY

God does not demand a beautiful vessel for His work, but He does desire a clean one.

Even an unscrupulous person expects a higher type of behavior from one who is a Christian, and one whose acts or statements ill become his profession is readily denounced by the unbeliever. Since we are partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4), and God is holy, should not our oneness with Him bespeak purity on our part? And, since the Holy Spirit dwells within believers' bodies (I Corinthians 6:19), should not the fruit of the Spirit be apparent? Should not Christ be seen in Christians? Are these not the most likely conclusions?

- Was not the Apostle Paul amazed when he found that Christ was not formed in the professing believers at Galatia? (Galatians 4:9).
- Was not the Lord Jesus disturbed in heart when He sent His message to Sardis, in which He said, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead"? (Revelation 5:1).

Our profession of faith in the finished work of Christ should not only give us standing with God, but before men as well.

BEING THE PEOPLE OF GOD DEVELOPS PURITY

We must not be blinded to the fact that there is growth in grace. We begin our spiritual babyhood with the "**sincere milk of the word**" (I Peter 2:2).

We are expected and exhorted to proceed toward maturity and the ability to take and to assimilate "**strong meat**" (Hebrews 5:14).

What has this to do with the matter of purity? Much in many ways. We are cleansed by the washing of water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26).

The deeper we go into the purifying Truth, the more evident effect will it have upon our lives.

The Christian has a weighty inducement to be progressively sanctified. It is twofold:

He has (a) *the charge*—"Be ye holy for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16).

He has (b) *the challenge*—"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (the Lord) is pure" (I John 2:2).

Besides this, the Scriptures abound in encouragement toward this end.

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,” the beloved Apostle urged, **“perfecting holiness in the fear of God”** (II Corinthians 7:1).

By **“perfecting”** is meant *to execute or to fulfil further*. Elsewhere it is rendered **“perform”** (Romans 15:28; II Corinthians 8:11). The main emphasis is that of progress or advancement. And it seems to be high time the church was evidencing more maturity and revealing more definite conformity to Christ, for in eternity past He set His eyes upon her; came one day to seek and save her; now sanctifies and sustains her.

The Privilege of the People of God

“ . . . 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” (Deuteronomy 26:9).

With each reminder that they were an holy people unto the Lord, there came to Israel a further unveiling of the hallowed relation which they sustained to the Most High. Here is a choice revelation. It sparkles with beauty and abounds in impressiveness. It speaks its own message with clarity and emphasis, and presents itself to our minds under three distinct captions.

Jubilation—“Made in praise.”

The root of the word translated **“praise”** suggests both sound and color. What is divinely built into the believer should enable him both to shout and shine. He should not be out of tune or off color. He should not sound out dreary notes or show forth drab hues. The word also denotes laudation; literally, a hymn. **“We are his workmanship** (*poiema*— *poems*)” (Ephesians 2:10).

The people of God are not to be blank verse or unbalanced meter, but are to possess rhyme and rhythm.

- The Lord wants to express Himself through us.
- He desires to sing through us notes of promise, peace and hope to those who are without melody in their hearts and face the bitter wails of a lost eternity.
- He wants to shine through us to those in dense darkness of sin and despair.

Appellation—“Made in name.”

What God makes enjoys the prestige of His great Name. He impresses His very nature in the souls of believing people and stamps His own name upon their foreheads (Revelation 22:4).

- It is an everlasting name (Isaiah 56:5).
- It is a tower of strength, providing a safe retreat into which the righteous may run (Proverbs 18:10).
- It is the badge of honour, the emblem of authority and the insignia of power.
- It is the banner under which countless millions have marched in the fields of godly conquest.

David brushed aside the armour of Saul and bulwarked himself with the name of the Lord as he attacked and retired Goliath of Philistine terror. Those who understand the meaning and experience the sacred exercise of heaven-tuned affections in united worship, know that, ere finite creatures can enter into the veil of such solemn nearness to the Infinite, they must gather in His name (Matthew 18:20).

Nor are the resources of the Throne of Grace released in response to supplications of praying saints until there is presented the Name that all heaven honors and adores (John 14:14).

The name of the Lord given to His people is the imprimatur of the Master upon the servants whom He chooses, and the watermarks of distinction in all those who are ambassadors of Christ. It contains the necessary appeal and the inherent power to govern the words and works of the Christian (Colossians 3:17).

The promise which God gave through Moses was to the effect that He would make His people excel all others in praise and name and honour. Since He is faithful Who has promised and will perform, this has become a blessed actuality.

- No other people can boast of the “**new song**” which the Saviour implants within the heart.
- No other people can contemplate the triumphal rejoicing which will ensue among the redeemed in the most excellent glory.
- Nor is there a name so rich in suggestion attaching itself to any other people.

Its meaning is derived from Him Whose name is called Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6).

We, with Paul, are chosen vessels to bear that name before the peoples of the earth (Acts 9:15).

This is a privilege par excellence.

Veneration—“Made in honor.”

Jeremiah was commanded to visit the potter’s house in order to hear the Lord speak. The artificer had just discovered a vessel of clay that had developed unsightly imperfections, so he put it on the wheel and made it again as seemed good to him. “**O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?**” saith the Lord (Jeremiah 18:6).

Then, piercing the mists of futurity, the time is envisioned when this shall be an accomplished fact and they shall be unto Him “**a name of joy, a praise and an honour**” (Jeremiah 33:9).

While the Lord both desires and deserves honour of His people (Malachi 1:6), it is crystal clear that the greater part of the honor which accrues heavenward is not what the people do for God but what God does for the people.

The word “**honour**” merits some attention. Of its many occurrences in the Old Testament, the word thus translated, seems to appear but three times.

- In the first instance, it has to do with purpose (Deuteronomy 26:19).
- In the second with praise (Psalm 71:8).
- In the third with prospect (Jeremiah 33:9).

Each mention concerns comeliness, beauty, majesty and glory for the people whom the Lord has chosen. How can we comprehend the deep significance of His love which He has set upon us?

Although we are now filled with His joy and adorned with His Name, the honor which he has designed for us is now but embryonic. One day it will issue in the full birth of excellence and grandeur. If there is any doubt in our minds about the future glory of Israel, there need be no nebulousness about the prospect of the Church. We shall see Him and shall be like Him (I John 3:2).

Glorious day, this!

The Promotion of the People of God

“The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself” (Deuteronomy 28:9).

This is the fifth and final occurrence of this differentiating description of the people of God as found in the fifth book of Moses. The word **“establish”** has to do with strength, sustenance and success, all of which the Lord promises to them whom he has brought unto Himself.

STRENGTH FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

When it comes to problems, plights and perplexities, the Apostle Paul had run the gauntlet. When his course had all but ended, he testified, **“Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me”** (II Timothy 4:17).

Regardless of the heavy exactions imposed upon our limited resources, reinforcements and replenishments are rushed to the trusting heart (Deuteronomy 33:25).

The Lord told Israel to dismiss all fear and dismay, that strengthening assistance would be borne to them with the right hand of His righteousness (Isaiah 41:10).

If Paul could do all things through the strength which Christ vouchsafed to him (Philippians 4:13), then may all Christians do likewise. It is undoubtedly unfair to claim inability for the performance of a profitable ministry when His empowerment is so available.

Our weakness is but the opportunity for Him to prove His strength.

SUSTENANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

God can prepare a table in the wilderness or provide a feast in the midst of a famine. If it requires the dispensing of manna from heaven or the dispatching of a meal by a raven, God is able.

He has done it; He can do it again. David affirmed that he had never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread (Psalm 37:25).

Paul promised that all our daily requirements were assured in the divine economy (Philippians 4:19).

“All things come of thee” (I Chronicles 29:14), David prayed with heartfelt thanksgiving.

James, too, exulted in the knowledge that beneficent gifts and perfect presents descend from Him with whom no variation occurs nor shadow cast by His turning (James 1:17).

It is not delivery to His people which concerns our heavenly Father; it is devotion from them.

SUCCESS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Let us remember that the word “**success**” is suggested by the statement, “**The Lord shall establish thee.**”

Establishment is success. If success is the attainment of a happy and favorable status, then one has entered into a fortunate position indeed who has become established unto the Lord. And this is prerequisite to spiritual prosperity.

A paraphrase on Psalm 91:1 may help us here: “***He who becomes established in the place of the Lord’s appointment, shall continue with permanence in nearness to the Almighty.***”

These are days when establishment unto the Lord is sadly neglected, with an increasing demand upon us for superficial stimulants to “keep the people going” in a weak and wavering profession.

When faithful Samuel of old perceived that Israel was bent on having a king as the heathen round about, he pleaded with the people to ponder the matter more thoroughly. He reminded them that the Lord had advanced Moses and Aaron. The implication was to the effect that, whether they had judges or kings; true promotion comes only from the Lord who knows the end from the beginning.

The question was; will you pursue a devious, unpromising course? The same question obtains today, and is no less serious. We need to be established. We must be established if we are going to enjoy success in the things of God.

“Ye are an holy people unto the Lord.”

~ end of chapter 6 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
