

God's People

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Who are your people? Blue collar people? Country club people? We tend to use the word “people” to describe those of a similar social status or who share similar values. “People” can also refer to family.

God has always had a people in the world. He has gone to great lengths to provide a path for everyone to be adopted into His family. Of course, Jesus is the Way. Jesus must be accepted by faith. At the end of the Bible, the apostle John describes God as being united with His people.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

This beautiful scene depicts God's new world. The voice telling us, “The dwelling place of God is with man” has a familiar echo. We have heard this before in John's declaration concerning Jesus: “the Word became flesh and He dwelt among us” (John 1:14). However, something different is happening in Revelation. God Himself comes to dwell with His people: face to face, as He is, and as we are fully known. Not a single degree of separation.

If we want to be part of God's people in the future, we must first become His people in the present. By faith in Jesus, we are adopted into God's family. Then, we are to follow the Spirit as He leads us to eternal life. As we follow, we will begin to be transformed. Like all families, we will begin to develop and share certain features and characteristics. Consider the traits of God's people.

God's People Share...

1). Blood. Every human shares the blood of their parents. Our biological make-up is coded in our DNA. Concerning God's people, we share the blood of His Son, Jesus. The blood of Jesus paid the cost of our sins (Rom. 3:25). The blood of Jesus paid the cost of our redemption (1 Pet. 1:18-29). The blood of Jesus paid the cost of the Church (Acts 20:28).

This is why we sing, “There’s power in the blood!” Yet, the power of Jesus’ blood will not have any impact on us unless and until we believe. Faith in the blood of Jesus cleanses us of our sins. The sacrifice of Jesus at the cross humbles us to surrender.

2). A name. For many generations, God’s people were known by the name of an older patriarch. God gave Jacob a new name: Israel. God did not work through any people in the world. God worked through the people of Israel. Yet, God planned to widen His perspective and broaden His people.

In Isaiah, the Lord promised to give His people a new name (Isa. 62:2). They would no longer be known as the people of Israel, the sons of Jacob, or Abraham. When the Lord came to earth in the form of Jesus, He pointed to this coming name change. Jesus changed the name of Cephas to Peter.

After the resurrection, believers in Jesus were derided as nothing more than a Jewish sect belonging to “the Way” (Acts 24:14). However, disciples of Jesus began to be called “Christians.” The community of believers in Antioch was the first to wear the title of “Christ.” This was not derogatory but identified the people who believed Jesus was Lord.

3). Traits. People of the same family share various traits. Recently, I met my great-uncle’s grandson. Did you follow that? My great-uncle is 88. His grandson is in his 30’s. While talking to the grandson, I thought, “This must have been what my great-uncle was like when he was in his 30’s.” The younger bore all the traits and mannerisms of the older. Physical build. Facial features. Tone of voice. Kind-natured demeanor. The resemblance was striking.

Similarly, God’s people bear His image. His image is ruined in us by sin. Thankfully, God’s image can be renewed in us through faith in Jesus. We must bring our traits into harmony with God’s image (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:5-14). Then, we can radiate God’s glory into the world. Everything about us is to communicate to others that we are God’s people.

4). Purpose. There was a time when families were mainly known for their respective trades. Their trades were often reflected in their names: i.e. Smiths. Likewise, God’s people are known by their vocation. The apostle Peter wrote, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

Peter was thinking about the old prophets Isaiah and Hosea when he composed this text. God called the nations that lived in gloomy darkness into the light of His family (Isa. 9:1-2). The Gentiles were not His people. However, through faith in Jesus, they could become

His people. As God's people, we are to devote our lives to sharing the hope of His Son with the world.

Conclusion

God wants everyone to be part of His family by faith in His only begotten Son. His people are special. However, our election brings great responsibilities. We cannot live for ourselves. Peter says we must "proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." We must tell others about the love of God shown in Jesus.