

The Peculiar Nation

The Peculiar Nation is not like the rest of the nations of the world. It is *tribal*. The restoration of all things is the *re-tribalization* of the Body of Messiah into twelve different geographical areas of the world — into twelve self-governing tribes (Jer 31:1; Num 23:9).

To be *tribal* is what makes us *peculiar* — His special possession.

*To this promise **our twelve tribes**, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. (Acts 26:7)*

See also: Jms 1:1; Eph 2:12; Gal 6:16; Acts 13:46-48; Isa 49:6

The restoring of the tribes of Israel in Isa 49:6 is prophecy, and if prophecy is prophecy, then it will be fulfilled by Mk 9:11-12.

And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? (Mk 9:11-12)

1 Pet 2:9 is a nation. Mt 21:43 is a nation. A nation is made up of tribes (the modern term is *states* or *provinces*). But Israel, the New Sons of Jacob, is *twelve tribes*. We are His special people — His possession. It says *possession* in many translations, in place of *peculiar people*. What does peculiar mean?

*For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a **peculiar** people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. (Dt 14:2).*

*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. (Dt 26:18)*

*For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his **peculiar** treasure. (Ps 135:4)*

Peculiar there means a special treasure, jewel — someone's own possession.

Peculiar means "My possession." Israel is His possession. He says, "This is My own possession — My special people." It is translated many ways, but it is always talking

about property — personal, acquired possessions. Our Master bought us. We're His personal possession.

So there is a lot to understand about what He is saying about His peculiar people. We're peculiar. That has a bad connotation in one way, but a good connotation in another. Today the world *peculiar* means *odd* and *strange*. To Him *peculiar* meant a set-apart, holy people whom others could look up to.

The Prophecy of Balaam

For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. (Num 23:9)

Who was he looking at? They were far in the distance. What does it mean that they were alone? It couldn't mean the scattered Israelites, or the Jews, because they mixed with the world. They became like the world and took on the identity of the world. You don't even know who the ten tribes are now, because they are so identified with the world that there is no distinction.

Balaam's prophecy is the Isa 49:6 restoration of all things (Mk 9:11). It is a picture of the Twelve Tribes — the nation of Israel. Jacob had twelve sons and Israel is twelve tribes as a separate society (Jer 31:1).

The Jews have kept a semblance of their identity, but still they are totally involved with the identity of the world, and with worldly things. They are very involved in making money. They control so much of the economy of the world.

Num 23:9 couldn't be talking about them. It has to be a people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself with the world. Are we dwelling alone? If you look at the word alone, how would you see that? Alone — separate — as our Master said, "In the world, but not of it" (Jn 15:19; 17:11,14-16,18). We are alone, in that sense, as His separate holy people. Israel forfeited their peculiarity as a people. It was given over to a nation that would be peculiar.

*Who 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)*

This is His *holy* nation. *Holy* means separated from the world into tribes — a tribal nation, with their own identity — peculiar people, solitary in their own culture (1 Pet 2:12; Mal 1:11).

*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)*

Peculiar (5459) — a commonwealth of special people — His jewels.

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar** people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet 2:9)*

The Supra Culture

In Num 23:9, Balaam had to be prophesying about something in the far future. They would be that kind of a people who wouldn't have anything to do with the world, they are dwelling alone, separate from society. They are in society, but separate, having their own separate culture — the *supra culture*. It is far exceedingly above all the other cultures of the world.

Cultures always develop over a period of time. That's what *culture* means. Animals don't have culture. They don't experience a progression. They are just the same when they are born today as they were 6,000 years ago. Man has taken on culture. He is developing. It is supposed to get better, but in a lot of cases it gets worse.

But our culture is from the Spirit in us. Whoever is born of the Spirit has that culture. We don't have to learn *not* to live in the world. The world destroys the culture — the special culture that makes a special people on the Earth. That's why we avoid being a part of the world and taking on the customs and traditions of the world. We have our own traditions. We have our own way of life. We come into that culture instantly when we receive the Holy Spirit. It doesn't take hundreds of years to develop.

The Love of God Makes us Peculiar

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Rom 5:5)

The love of God in our hearts in our hearts makes us a peculiar people. When you are baptized, you become part of that peculiar people, because the love of God has been poured out in your heart. So that sets you apart with all the rest of the people in that supra culture. That culture makes us a distinguished people — a peculiar people.

Peculiar implies distinguishing characteristics, different from the normal or usual, a special or particular culture that makes people curious. The culture doesn't turn people away — our traditions, our attire. They look at it and it agrees with the instinctive knowledge in their conscience of the natural law.

For example, our men's hair is just the right length: short, meaning not long, and not shorn. Nature teaches you that. Therefore, the people who are willing to do Father's will, will see that and say, "Yes, that's right." It strikes your heart as normal. To our Father it is normal, but according to modern culture, it is not normal. "Normal" is to have your hair shorn, even for women.

So the love of God, which has been poured out in our hearts, makes us a peculiar people. What happened in the first Church to make them lose their identity as a peculiar people? They became like the rest of the world. They lost their culture. That's why we have to maintain our culture.

Paul said that if someone doesn't maintain the traditions, then you should not even speak to him (Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 11:2,16; 2 Ths 2:15; 3:14). It says to have nothing to do with such people, because they are destroying that culture — the peculiar people. Then you are no longer peculiar. You look just like the world — indistinguishable from the world. But we have to maintain a separate culture in order to be a light to the nations.

Why did the Apostle John have to write 1 John? Something was coming into the Edah towards the end of the first century. They were starting to live in such a way that they were losing their distinguishing characteristics as the supra culture — the peculiar people who belong to our Master — His possession. It says in Gal 3:29 that those who *belong* to Messiah are Abraham's offspring.

Even Abraham had to come out of the world and go to a separate place. They began to develop their own culture. In time they were supposed to drive out all the other inhabitants of the land. But they didn't do it. Israel took on the customs and manners of the nations around them.

In the First Church, the love of God was poured into their hearts, and they became a culture — a peculiar people, a holy people, a separate people. They were a light to the world. The world could see the darkness they were in because they were a light. If the people around us are willing to do our Father's will, they will see it.

...having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Pet 2:12)

They have to observe our behavior over a period of time, not just taking one glance. It may take years for people to see and understand, as it did in Island Pond. The word *observe* in 1 Pet 2:12 means over a period of time.

Our behavior has to be different, peculiar — something that people see that stirs something in them and makes them curious. Sometimes people see our women's clothes and say, "Where did you get those clothes? They really look nice. I would like to have something like that." Or they see the modesty of our women and it touches something in their heart. If the modesty is overdone it becomes a disgrace, as with the Muslims. We don't want to become a reproach, but we have to have that peculiarity that distinguishes us from other people. We need to be like our Father wants us to be.

So that's what happens when His love is poured out in our hearts: we become that peculiar people. We all dwell together as a light to the Gentiles, in order to expose their darkness. 1 John was written to people who were falling away. They were beginning to rely on head knowledge. Some people call it *Gnosticism*, but it is just head knowledge. They started learning things differently.

The Love of the World

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 Jn 2:15)

Do you think it's possible to have the love of God in you if you love the world? You might think it's possible. But if you love the world, it means that the love of God is not in you; it's an impossibility to have both. The "love of the world" doesn't mean that you have some trouble and fall into things of the world, but it is a continual love for the world. If you see it and repent and express your hatred of it, then the love of God is in you.

Our Father would prefer that we wouldn't ever fall into loving the world. This could apply to listening to music on the radio. If I am listening to the radio, it's only for the purpose of the Body of Messiah. It's not just for our knowledge or pleasure. If I come across any type of music, even high-brow music, I can't stand it because I know what would happen if I listen to it. It's a worldly thing. It's something that ministers to the soul. The love of God in me can't stand it. It won't allow me to listen to it. Love demands that I wouldn't give myself to that.

If you did give yourself to listening to music, then conviction would come to you that you are loving what you're not supposed to love. The direction of your will is going towards that, and it's feeding something within you. If you do love the world and the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in you.

That's why we don't have televisions. We don't sit around listening to the news all the time. That's why we have current events. If we need to know anything, we'll hear it

through the Current Events class. If we give ourselves to trying to decipher these things, or to extract the precious from the vile, if we think we can do it, then we might have a higher opinion of ourselves than we ought to. We might take in a lot of the vile stuff from the world, if we're not really able to extract the precious from the vile.

What is “The World?”

We saw a man today standing in front of his office, practicing with his golf clubs. He probably wants the status of being on the golf course. Golf is a status symbol. It gives you self-glory. That's what motivates them. That's the love of the world. He doesn't realize it, because he is of the world. There's probably nothing in him that convicts him. But he just gives himself to everything in the world, like television, movies, and things of that nature.

We have talked about getting a particular movie about the Civil War, which has a little bit of a different slant than other things that have been said before. If we did get something like that, it would only be for the sake of learning what we could from it, for the sake of the Body. This seems like something that we would leave to the elders or leaders to discern.

For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 Jn 2:16)

Most Christians still love the world, but they can't distinguish it, because they are in the world, and of the world. Television, movies, and other worldly things are just part of their life.

If we have a love of the world, we have to discern it. We have to ask ourselves, “Do I love the world? Do I love worldly music? Do I love worldly entertainment? Do I love worldly sports? Is the direction of my will towards that? Is there something that's pulling me over there?” I know I don't love the world. If I do touch something of the world, it must be for the good of the Body. We all have to have that understanding.

The Gift of Guilt

You might have fallen into doing worldly things for the wrong motives, but we didn't continue doing it. That's what loving means: giving yourself to something continually. It's not just something you do once or twice; you can repent for that. We feel so guilty when you do it.

Our Father has given us a great, marvelous gift of guilt, which can keep us from drowning ourselves in the things of the world. If we don't repent, our Father will cause discipline to come to our lives. Some terrible thing could happen. It could even hurt or disgrace the Community, or someone could be killed. We don't want to do that in the Community. We can't go on, loving the world, while we pretend to serve Him every day in the Body.

One of the greatest things a person can do, if he gives himself to things of the world, is that he can confess it. If he has influenced others, he can go to them and plead for their forgiveness. That's a great thing. It shows that our Father's love is still there. It couldn't be suppressed, or calloused. That love has to continue to take first place in our lives. We have to be so spiritual that, if anyone tries to lead us into sin, we will stand and say, "No!" and flee and tell the elders. If you are not spiritual, you are carnal. There were people who used to make fun of the word "spiritual." Our Master was spiritual. If we want to be like Him, we'll be spiritual.

Old Israel Lost their Peculiarity

Mt 21:33-45 tells that Israel forfeited their peculiarity as a people. The Kingdom would be given to a nation who would produce the fruit of the Kingdom — a peculiar people dwelling alone as His own special, peculiar treasure.

The basic meaning of the noun *peculiar* (5459) is *personal possession or property, as to acquire personal property*. The peculiar people was the nation acquired by God (Mal 3:16-18). Old Israel was God's personal possession. But this belonging to Him was

transferred to the people of 1 Pet 2:9, due to Mt 21:43, until this new nation would produce the fruit, as Paul teaches in Rom 11 (Dt 14:2; Ex 19:5-6). Dt 26:16-19 alluded to Tit 2:14. 1 Pet 2:9 — Purchased, bought, acquired possession.

His Peculiar People are a Contrasting Society

Those people will always dwell as a separated people in communities (Jn 17:10-24). They will be “in the world, but not of it.” They will be a light, to illuminate the darkness of the world, so they can see their lost state of being.

Num 23:9 looked forward through time to us. It never meant to be *physically* separated, as to be unable to be a witness of the Kingdom. The prophecy said they would “bear the fruit of it” (Mt 21:43; 24:14). But still, and all the more, they are peculiar — as to be a brand new supra-culture. They are differentiated from the rest of the world as a *contrasting society* — for the world’s benefit (Jn 3:16).

Peculiar means distinctive characteristics of only one nation of people who are all one, and who have a noticeable love for one another in every place (Jn 13:35; 17:23; Mal 1:5,11; 3:18; 4:6). *Peculiar* means different from the normal or usual, but special, particular and curious — having distinguishing characteristics as a supra culture (Num 23:9; 1 Pet 2:9 — marvelous light).

Peculiar has to do with wealth — the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph 2:12). It has to do with having been purchased as one’s private property, possessions, and treasures (1 Chr 29:3; Ecc 2:8; Dt 7:6; Tit 2:14). 1 Pet 2:9 had this concept, which described the First Church. The prophecy of Ex 19:5-6 transferred to 1 Pet 2:9-10 — to bear the fruit of Acts 26:7, to be true sons of Abraham (Gen 18:19; Jn 8:39), in order to obtain Gen 15:18 for them, or else Mt 19:28 would be a prophecy never fulfilled, as Acts 26:6-8 and Isa 49:8.

Rom 11:15 is Mt 19:28, done by Abraham’s seed (Gal 3:26-29) — the sons of God, special agents for Yahweh, in Messiah Yahshua. They belong to Him as a peculiar

people who are His possession. His special people do for Abraham what His natural seed did not do (Mt 21:33-45; Jn 8:37-45).

The word *peculiar* could mean odd or strange in modern terms, as if we lived in physical solitude, like the world's concept of a commune. The word *commune* has bad connotations, due to the odd and strange outcomes of those who live in certain communes.

But *peculiar* was to have a different connotation for Israel, as Ex 19:5-6 was to be a Royal Priesthood, and a Holy Nation. Even the word *holy* could have strange connotations. People relate it to very strange and odd religious organizations — mainly the Greek and Roman Churches, and other denominations that follow such perverse religious observances, and dress in attire more bizarre than the Muslims, or the Hare Krishna devotees.

God's Peculiar Design

But *peculiar*, in our God's eyes, is how He designs His people on the Earth — their dress, customs, traditions, and especially their love and unity, in a holy nation that is separated from the traditions of the nation in which a tribe is located.

...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Eph 4:16)

To be involved in this supra culture requires obedience to the gospel in order to be immersed into the Holy Nation and to obey every word which comes from the mouth of God. This is absolute dedication to its goals.

The Traditions and Dress of the Holy Nation

The life and culture and modesty of the peculiar nation is such that it will provoke the conscience of people in the nations. We are their only example left on the face of the Earth. Our peculiar way of life is to them their only hope. The witness in Mt 24:14 is the

gospel of the coming Kingdom — lived out now in every place (1 Cor 1:2; Mal 1:11; 1 Tim 2:8) — in every locality as a light (Lk 1:78-79).

To be these peculiar people on the face of the Earth takes Jn 13:34-35, and this takes 1 Jn 3:16,23. We are to love one another no less than He loved us.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 Jn 3:16)

This of course takes Lk 9:23, and Heb 3:6,13 takes a community in order to be this peculiar people. If you are not peculiar, then you are not God's holy people — belonging to Him as His precious possession.

But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1 Cor 6:17)

His Spirit makes us peculiar and differentiates us from the rest of society.

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 Jn 2:6)

1 Jn 2:6 makes us peculiar indeed. As one raised in Christianity, the only thing that separated me from the rest of the world is that I was supposed to know that I was going to Heaven, but to be honest, I wasn't deceived to this degree. That is the reason our Father could use me to do His will, as all who are willing to do His will (Jn 7:17). Thank you Father!!!

There wasn't a bloomin' thing that I did different from the rest of the world, but supposedly I was going to Heaven. If only I could convince myself of it. I was not part of any kind of a peculiar people. But we did, that is my daddy and mother, go to a meeting on Sunday and Sunday night. After television came into the picture, half or more of the congregation didn't show up Sunday night. I remember that. After a few years, the congregation bought the preacher a TV, and he took it. We all felt relieved in our conscience, at least those of us who had a TV ourselves. I missed Sunday night if the ball game went into overtime.

How can you tell when someone leaves?

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. (1 Jn 2:19)

Could 1 Jn 2:19 possibly be speaking of Christians? Are the Christians the ones who left (*they*), or the ones who stayed (*us*) — they or us? How could one ever know who left, or who stayed, or who isn't attending church on Sunday anymore. How would you know what works they were forsaking (Eph 2:10)? Just what is it that makes them a body, members of one another (1 Cor 12:27)?

Maybe you don't recognize the back of their head anymore because they got a new hairdo, or changed the color. The ones who sit in the balcony you never see in a thousand years any way. They live up on the mountain. So does 1 Jn 2:19 make any sense in the context of Christianity? What about verse 27 or 28?

So how can you tell who has left and who hasn't? We used to play rotating Church denominations. But aren't all one in the Spirit and one in the Lord? One can say, "You left us!" The other can say, "No I didn't, I just went to another denomination to listen to a new charismatic preacher. Brother we are all one." (Eph 4:4-6; Jn 13:35; 17:23)

"Brother we love one another and we are all one. The whole world sees that our splits and divisions are just friend's different views, but that the one Spirit teaches us. After all there is just one Body. We are one. We didn't leave; we are all He has."

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind. (Eph 4:17)

How can this be a command to Christians today? When someone becomes a Christian, no one knows it. Christians would say "If only the first disciples lived today and had to work in the workplace Monday through Friday, they would not have written what they did there." How could one live such a different life and *not* live in community? There's so much church in the world, and world in the church that there's no difference.