

To the Servants of the Most High God at Topeka, Kansas, Sunday, April 14, 2024

Balaam and the Blessed People - a Chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, A Peculiar People – Part 4

I finish up my series on Balaam today. King Balak hired a false priest named Balaam to curse Israel, but instead through God's providence, Balaam blessed Israel three times (Numbers 21-24). In the New Testament, God refers to His people this way:

1 Pet. 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a 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.*

Adapted from John Brown.

But Ye Are... a Royal Priesthood – Beloved, both words are loaded with meaning. The Elect of God offer up **spiritual** sacrifices that are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, like Able's blood sacrifice, while Cain's sacrifice was not accepted (Gen. 4, Heb. 11:4). *And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen* (Revelation 1:6).

We are **priests** of the Most High God. Christ makes His Elect possessor of **priestly and regal honors**. He makes them **kings** in giving them even now a superiority to things seen and temporal, in enabling them to trample under foot our and His spiritual enemies, the powers of darkness, and the lusts of their own hearts, which once reigned over them.

He will at a future period, in a manner of which we can form only an indistinct conception, enable His saints to "take the **kingdom**" (Dan. 7:18). *But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever and "reign on earth." And hast made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.* (Rev. 5:10).

Re 4:4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their head's crowns of gold. A throne, and crowns of gold represent royalty. The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and

honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Rev. 4:10-11).

In the great day of final retribution, the Elect, along with Christ and the Father, shall judge the world and angels (*Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ... 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? 1 Cor. 6:2-3*). *For I the Lord love judgment (Is. 61:8).*

Kings and those in the **royal line** do such important and stately things. Rev. 3:21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.* Their appearance and demeanor are “like the children of a king,” doing the will of their **royal Father**. They are freed from all degrading submission to human authority and sin. They are only answerable to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Beloved, you belong to a kingdom, not made with hands and you are the subjects of a sovereign that cannot be seen, but which reigns, and you are a royal citizen and priest of Christ’s Kingdom.

The mighty Jehovah, the object of our worship, is your King, so that the discharge of all your civil duties has a religious character, all being done to God. Christians are not a collection of isolated individuals, they are the “body of Christ” and members in particular. They are one body in Christ and everyone, members of one another. *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular (1 Cor. 12:26-27).* They are a kingdom and subjects of the Sovereign. *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 (Ex. 19:5-6).*

The members of this royal priesthood belong to a spiritual monarchy, at the head of which is Jehovah, in the person of the only begotten Son. They are His subjects and perform all of their religious duties, all exercises of the priestly function. Whatever they do, they do it as unto the Lord. They are ever dwelling in His sanctuary, ever engaged in His service, and gratefully acknowledge that grace of the Lord and indebted to Him for all this honor, security and happiness. And they exercise their duties with devotion and love and integrity and because they love to do it, and not out of necessity (God does not need them). The best way of showing gratitude is by acting in a manner corresponding to the high and holy dignity to which you are raised. Conduct yourselves like members of the chosen family, denizens

(inhabitants or occupiers of a space) of the priestly kingdom. We should happily and with joy be obedient children and submit to the Father.

Be affectionate children, giving your Father veneration (awe, respect, reverence), esteem, love and confidence He so well deserves. Give due honor to Him, your Elder Brother who has been appointed “as son over the whole family” and remember it is the will of the Father, “that all should honor the Son” as they honor himself. They are not to be regulated by their own will, but by the will of the Lord. They are to have no mind, but His mind, and no will, but His will. They are to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually and give thanks to Him.

The Elect of God (no less than the God of the Universe), being in the **royal** line, and who shall shortly sit at the **King’s** table, are from no “mean city.” *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city...* (Ac 21:39). That is, beware of how you treat them! They may be impoverished, and wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and in tribulation and in prison now, but beware, things are not what they appear. Their actual citizenship is in the next realm, and there they are entitled to glory and riches in Christ. In the next life, they will live like **kings**, and boast favor from God and wear **royal apparel** (the robes of Christ’s righteousness) and a crown (given to them by Christ) and sit at the King of Glory’s table and reign with their Master. These light afflictions and *trial of our faith are but for a moment and are more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire* (1 Pet 1:7). The Elect *esteem the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt* and they have *respect unto the recompence of the reward* (Heb 11:26). *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a **crown of glory** that fadeth not away* (1Pet. 5:4). God has given the Elect to have faith in these promises, though they see them not now. The Elect will be separated from sin and sinners and be consecrated to God. As priests unto God they will be cleansed by Christ and anointed with the Holy Ghost and be sanctified by His grace and be allowed to draw nigh to God and sit with Christ in His **throne**, even as Christ also overcame. They will be set down in His Father’s throne (Rev. 3:21). And, they **will be a pillar in the temple of His God, and shall go no more out** (Rev. 3:12).

But ye are... an Holy Nation -

At Mount Sinai God said, *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* (Ex. 19:6). Israel was a **nation** of millions of people. They all lived in close proximity to each other. They had the same religion, laws, government, customs, interests, and enemies. By God, it was a **holy**

nation. They were completely given over to worshipping the One True and Living God. Israel was separate and apart from the rest of the world, which was given over to idolatry. Peter references a “nation” because it contemplates a large number of people (as opposed to a family or city). This nation represents citizenship and a culture of specific values from Christ. This **nation** is a part of *the church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of the truth* (1 Tim. 3:15). This **holy nation** is no longer a servant of Satan, imprisoned and a slave to sin. Christians have been turned from the service of the god of this world to the service of the Living and True God. *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the Living and True God* (1 Th 1:9).

There is no dual citizenship here beloved. You are either a citizen of the country of the Prince of the Power of the Air and serve him, or you are a citizen of the country of Christ and you serve Him. We serve at Christ’s authority and are regulated by His law. *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon* (Mat. 6:24). Mammon means money, wealth, riches, substance, and everything that comes under the name of worldly goods. Serving “mammon” is incompatible with the service of the true God. In mammon their hearts go after their covetousness and are set upon earthly riches. They give up themselves to them, are eagerly and anxiously pursuing after them, and place their confidence in them. And He said unto them, *Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* Lu 12:15

As a “holy nation” the people of God are distinguished by the same customs and culture, and their custom and culture is fundamentally different from and opposed to the customs and culture which generally prevail among men. It is like going from this country to India. The language is different, the food is different, the government is different, the laws are different, and the customs and culture are different. If you go from one to the other, you get “culture shock.”

As a “holy nation” we seek to be with our own. We seek to be alone, so we are not corrupted by this world. We are given over to prayer and seeking God for all needs, not worldly wisdom, worldly pleasure, and worldly riches. Their whole mode of thinking, feeling, acting, and speaking is remarkably different and diverse from that of the people of this world. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth.* (John 17:16-17).



As a “**holy nation**” they have a common cause; the cause of their common Captain (Joshua 5:14). They have common interests (truth, holiness, righteousness, and peace of God the Father). They are engaged in a common war (*the wars of the Lord* – Numbers 21:14) and thus they have common enemies. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle* (a contest where the victor puts their foot on the neck of their adversary – this is a cage fight – a death match) *not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* (what evil you see on earth is the tip of the ice berg of what is really going on). *13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day* (against Satan and his

empire), *and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (Eph. 6:12-17).*

Matthew Henry - *The Christian armor is made to be worn; and there is no putting off our armor (without being wounded) until we have done our warfare and finished our course. The combat is not against human enemies, nor against our own corrupt nature only; we have to*

do with an enemy who has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls. The demons assault us in the things that belong to our souls, and labor to deface the heavenly image in our hearts. We must resolve by God's grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee. If we give way, he will get ground. If we distrust either our cause, or our Leader, or our armour, we give Satan the advantage. The different parts of the armour of heavily armed soldiers, who had to sustain the fiercest assaults of the enemy, are here described. There is nothing for the back; nothing to defend those who turn back in the Christian warfare.



And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:18-19). His majesty the devil and his minions are our enemy and adversaries.

True followers of Christ are not just a **nation**, but a **holy nation**. The term holy, or sacred, properly signifies separated from other persons or things, and dedicated to a sacred purpose. The true Christian church, though figuratively a nation, has nothing secular in its constitution, object or values. It is completely separated, completely distinct from all worldly societies. It is not political. It is not commercial. It is not philosophical. It is not a social club. It is solely religious. It's genuine members are all holy, taken out from among the world lying under the wicked one; dedicated to the service of God and his son, by the sprinkling of the blood of atonement, by the washing of the water or regeneration and by their own inward consent and outward profession.

They are a people **entirely** devoted and sacred to God. Their faculties, their property, their time, their opportunities, their bodies, their spirits are all His, and they cannot devote them to purposes different from His, without being guilty of desecration and sin. Revelation 2 and 3, make it crystal clear Beloved that you cannot commit open sin and detour towards Sodom without angering the Son, without Him having something *somewhat against you!* How scary and awful are these words. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the*

Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him (Col. 3:17). For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's (Rom. 14:8).

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens (of the holy nation) with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:18-22).

But ye are... a Peculiar People -

These people of God have many peculiarities that uniquely distinguish them from other people. Their behaviors, motivations, goals, purposes and ways are strange to the people they live amongst. They are not apologetic or ashamed of God. They do not celebrate the same festivals and feast days as the masses. They are constantly swimming against the



stream of this life. They refuse to be conformed to this world (Rom 12:2). If you relax for a moment, you are carried back downstream. They follow the strait and narrow way, that is not often used or even perceived, that leads to life (Mat. 7:13-14). They reject the broad way and wide gate that leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13-14). They are a faint signal that only a few in a million see and

appreciate.

A “**peculiar people**” also means that we are a **peculiar** treasure unto God. *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 (Ex. 19:5-6).* This “**peculiar** people is a purchased possession of God. The whole universe is God’s inalienable property. The whole earth and everything in it is God’s. But the heathen have alienated themselves from God. They have wholly given themselves up to God’s enemies to be used by them (Satan and his forces) to be their property.

The Elect of God, as true Christians have been bought with a price and redeemed unto God by the blood of His Son and delivered from the wrath to come. They have been delivered from sin and Satan, and the present evil world. They have been redeemed from all iniquity so that they may be a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). They are freed from the degrading bondage of sin, and made to “walk at liberty, keeping God’s commandments.” As they are the subjects of His **peculiar** property, so are they the objects of His peculiar regard. That are his special treasure, His jewels; He heaps on them tokens of His regard. They are His vineyard. The Lord their God walks in the midst of them. He rejoices over them with joy and love. He says: *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him* (Mal 3:17).

No one can pluck them out of His hand. He shall make the intelligent universe see and acknowledge that these **peculiar** people are HIS and that they are His **peculiar** property, His portion. These **peculiar** people have tasted that the Lord is gracious. It is not possible to estimate too highly those honors and advantages and delights for these people. *But as it is written* (Isaiah, 64:4), *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God* (1 Cor. 2:9-10). That is, God has not given man the intellectual or spiritual capacity at this time to see and understand the wonderful future state that is coming to His peculiar people. That future state is *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time* (1 Pet. 1:4-5). They do not have the least conception, notion, or the ability to imagine the wonderful state of rest they will enjoy for eternity. This is an unspeakable privilege. We must therefore be grateful, thankful and obedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19) and to His ways to not slip backwards into the bondage of sin and Satan and be disloyal to God, which has promised to convey so much to us if we are simply patient and wait on Him.

I must say - I vow to be obedient and no longer fashion myself according to my former lusts in my ignorance (1 Pet. 1:14). *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy* (1 Pet. 1:14-16).

We must not look back, as Lot's wife, to perdition (Gen. 19:26). *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:38-39). For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. (Heb. 6:4-8). Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).*

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

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. Deut. 26:17-19.

Moses had respect unto the recompence of the reward Heb. 11:26. Christ is exceedingly precious to all the faithful. The majesty and grandeur of His person, the dignity of His office, His near relation, His wonderful works, His immense love — everything engages the faithful to the highest esteem and respect for Jesus Christ. Disobedient children have no true faith. They are unpersuadable, incredulous, and impenitent. These may have some right notions, but no solid faith.

*De 7:6 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. Special: better, greater, or otherwise different from what is usual.*

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 Elect of God are not merely passive instruments, they are agents in showing forth Jehovah's praise. The manifestation of God made them (special and peculiar) in their calling to produce in their minds just and correct views of the divine character, and a corresponding mode of thinking and feeling and acting so that they cannot but show forth the praises of him who has called thee. They are to be loyal unto Him and glorify Him with their bodies and souls which are His. These special and peculiar plants are to bring forth the fruits of holiness, which naturally they yielded not, but now bring forth abundantly. To be capable of, disposed to and truly employed in, showing forth the praises of Jehovah is the highest dignity and happiness which can be conferred on created intelligent human beings. This is the essence of the happiness of the blessed in heaven. It is to restore man to his state before the fall. Speaking God's praises is not laborious, painful drudgery it is immense goodness, light, life, joy, and love for eternal ages. My dear fellow-immortals there can be no doubt your duty to show forth the praises of God! This is the first duty of every intelligent creature, and nothing can release you from this obligation. 8 *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's* (Rom 14:8). *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him* (Col 3:17).

who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light *1 Pet 2:9.*

God hath called us out of the gross and utter darkness of sin and Satan, into His marvelous light. We reflect the light of Christ and through His shining, we shine. We have no light of our own, but what the Father provides to us. *He is the Father of lights* (James 1:17). It is uniquely His, and He is the author of it. This light is the state of knowledge, purity, happiness in God and it is supernatural and marvelous. It converts spiritual darkness and waste into the garden of the Lord with beauty and rich in the fruits of righteousness.

I love you all. Amen.