

3 - A People for God

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. I Peter 2:9 niv

Created for His Glory

We read in [Isaiah 43:7](#) that God created man for His glory.

Think of "glory" as the measure of superiority of one person or thing over another. If we describe a sunrise as "glorious," we mean that it is superior to others. To "glorify" is to point out or declare that superiority.

God is the most glorious as compared to anyone or anything, anywhere, at any time, including the natural and spirit worlds. Nothing and nobody comes even close to His knowledge, power, love, creativity and more. He is "the God of gods," as in [Psa. 136:2](#). He is worthy to be glorified.

However, we know that the liar and thief Satan was able to convince Adam and Eve that what *he* offered was superior to what God had given them.

Ever since *then*, there has been the rivalry between God and Satan that you can feel in your ongoing battle with temptation. It is the [Gal. 5:16-26](#) struggle between your flesh and your spirit, both influenced by their spirit source that competes to be glorified by your choosing it in the moment. It's not complicated!

A Problem

God formed man for Himself. Man was to be the special part of creation that He would fellowship with, Spirit to spirit.

They would dwell together in the Garden and would delight in each other. We know the story - that they would soon be separated by sin.

But then, right there in [Gen. 3:15](#), God declared that He would deal with the sin problem. He initiated a plan through which His glory - His superiority over Satan - would be shown through those marked as

His special possession. He is the sovereign God; He has the last word about everything, and His original purpose for man would eventually be fulfilled.

A Solution

So, God crafted Israel as His own people amidst all the other peoples.

They would be marked by His presence, favored by Him, and used by Him to show His glory to other nations. See [Lev. 20:24-26](#) and [Ezek. 36:22-23](#).

We know that the Church is now where God rules and His glory is to be displayed, but do we realize how it connects to His original intent for man, and to Israel and the Old Testament?

Do we see world and church history as one united story of God's progressive revelation of Himself as He moves toward "full disclosure" in Christ ([Heb. 1:3](#), [John 14:19](#), [II Cor. 4:4](#)), through whom He redeemed all who would come to Him?

Identity

Church, THAT is our identity. It is *who* we are, *whose* we are and *why* we are.

It is comprehensive. It says everything about everything about us as individuals and together as the Body of Christ. It will shape how we handle adversity; how we use what we have and why we want more.

So, my American friends, does your personal identity come more from God and life with Him, or from being "American" with the freedoms, rights and opportunities that connotes?

And where do you and your local church find your faith identity? Is it as described above in being God's special people, abiding in His Kingdom and declaring His Name, or in your belief system, facilities, or program?

Always

This chapter's main text, [I Peter 2:9](#), connects us with God's actions in the Old Testament, and with His eternal purposes. [Titus 2:14](#) confirms it for today.

God wants His people to know that they are His and are to live for Him. In Ezekiel He says, "And you will know that I am the Lord," over 40 times!

In [Ezek. 36:22-32](#), God tells Israel that even though they had defiled themselves among the nations, He would redeem them for the sake of His holy name. [Jer. 33:9](#) is outright goose bumpy! Think "Church!"

Nothing about that has changed, but some things *are* delightfully different under the New Covenant.

Something New

Before, God's word came through prophets, but it has now come in the person of Jesus, as we can read in [Heb. 1:1-4](#) and [John 1:1-14](#).

Before, they were born physically as an Israelite, by the will of man ([John 1:13](#)), but now we are born again, into the Kingdom of God. ([John 3:5-7](#)). Our spirit is quickened. Made alive by His Spirit!

Before, they obeyed out of fear of the Law, or like living with an overbearing wife, but now we please God out the desire of a new heart. [I John 2:3-9](#) is powerful. John starts with the seriousness of obeying God, and says it is an old commandment, but then he says it is a new commandment.

The point is – it is "old" because it has always been His will, but it *is* "new" because we have a new heart that is freed and empowered to want to obey. It is now from inside of us. Absolutely powerful!

It is what God had said in [Deut. 30:6](#). We would now be marked as His people by circumcision of the heart, not of the flesh. See [Rom. 2:28-29](#), [Philip. 3:3](#), [Col. 2:11](#).

Before, God was only "with" His people, but in [John 14:17](#) Jesus said that His Spirit would now also be "in" them. [Rom. 8:9-11](#) and [I Cor. 3:16](#) also speak of His Spirit being in us.

The Big "If"

Something else that hasn't changed is the conditional "if" of [Ex. 19:5-6](#) and [Josh. 24:14-15](#), and Jesus said "if" again and again as a condition for Kingdom Life.

Man's disobedience led to original sin, and his choices have always defined his relationship with God.

Today, as in the Garden, God wants those who choose to give Him their hearts. To make Him the god who satisfies their soul hunger. He wants to woo us to Himself with His love and His promise to heal our brokenness and our wounds. He does not want us to relate to Him as an obedient bride whose husband was chosen by her parents.

He welcomes raped bodies and souls and makes them whole. Pure. His [Eph. 5:25-27](#) bride. He wants us to choose Him over Satan and to obey and serve Him because we love Him and are grateful to Him.

And He invites us into the Abundant Life of our new home, the Kingdom of God. Life there becomes bigger than life itself as we are filled with meaning and purpose when we give ourselves to Him.

We eagerly await Jesus' return as we live in the spirit-kingdom that the Father created for us here on the earth while Jesus prepares our eternal home in heaven.

THAT - is life in the Kingdom of God and it is like hidden treasures and fine pearls.

The Eye-Opener

The Kingdom of God is spirit in nature. Its life cannot be understood with the natural mind, which is dominated by the flesh ([I Cor. 2:14](#)), and that's a BIG problem for us.

Only the humble, repentant and obedient heart can have eyes to see and ears to hear the mysteries of His Kingdom ([Matt. 13:10-17](#)), and thus to experience the wonders of Life there which is entered through the narrow gate.

If we love Jesus we will obey Him ([John 14:21-24](#)), and He and the Father will come and make their abode in us and reveal more and more of themselves to us. What price of obedience could be too high for that - but obedience involves choice? Always.