

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 17- Luke 17:20-37

284- The Kingdom of God- Part 4

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Luke 17:20-37

20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;**

21 nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

22 And He said to the disciples, "**The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.**

23 "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after *them*.

24 "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

- 31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back.
- 32 "Remember Lot's wife.
- 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it.
- 34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left.
- 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.
- 36 ["Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."]
- 37 And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body *is*, there also the vultures will be gathered."

To the Glory of God

Now we are continuing to look at the words of the Lord Jesus that he spoke at the end of Chapter 17. And this particular narrative deals with the Divine Judgment that will occur when Jesus comes back to set up His Kingdom.

So let's look at what Jesus said and what He meant by what He said at the end of verse 20 all the way down to verse 23:

- 20 ... "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;
- 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."
- 22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.
- 23 "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after *them*.

So in its *first* Coming- the Kingdom of God is *spiritual*. And what I mean by that- is that the Kingdom of God is not natural, it isn't tangible. It is invisible, and, therefore- it is eternal. And as we have discovered- the Jews of that day all thought that the Messiah was going to come in great Power and Force and annihilate the pagans who

dominated Israel at that time, and they thought He would command a great army and would restore the Glory of Israel that they enjoyed under King Solomon.

So they were confused at the mild Nazarene- Who never even mentioned the pagan domination of Israel, and Who taught them to love and forgive their enemies, and Who taught that being in the Kingdom of God had to do with repenting of sin and trusting in Him by faith rather than with their own ethnic Jewishness and violent political overthrow.

So in verses 20&21, Jesus says to them,

The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed.

... and then in verse 21- He says,

nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.'

So here, Jesus was linking the Kingdom of God- *not* to a geographical area like Israel- but to a Person- *Himself*. So this first manifestation of the Kingdom of God is spiritual- it is internal- in the heart of people through the miracle of the New Birth.

Therefore, it doesn't matter how you were born. It makes no difference if you were born as a Jew or a Gentile. Or whether you were born as a male or a female. It doesn't matter if you were born with the capabilities of building a bridge or programming a computer. Everybody who is born- with whatever inclinations that are inherent within him- are born sinful. They are born in rebellion to God. They are born diseased and fallen and utterly separated from God. About 1,000 years before this moment recorded here in **Luke 17**- King David wrote in **Psalms 51:5**:

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Now this doesn't mean that David's mother was engaging in sin when he was conceived- it means that the very same "sin nature" and the very same "guilt" of Adam's sin was passed onto David at his conception. This is a Biblical Concept called "Original Sin". Original Sin is a Doctrine that was hammered out primarily by Augustine in his

great battle with Pelagius about 1700 years ago that teaches that all human beings are born lost. That you don't have to "do something" *after* you are born to be lost- but that you are lost and fallen and fully depraved at the very moment of conception. And Original Sin teaches that we are sinful through the seed of the father being passed from one generation to the other.

And while most people in the modern Church fully agree that we are all born with the very same rebellious and sinful *nature* of Adam- very few understand that in *addition* to that- we are also personally *guilty* of the Sin that Adam committed because we were in his loins when he sinned.

Now let me tell you what this means. This is not possible but theoretically, if you were born and put into a glass cage where you had no contact with anybody your entire life, and you had your food and water slid under the door, and you were kept in that cage your entire life and never spoke to anyone, and you never read a book or watched TV or listened to the radio- or in other words- you never did anything. You just sat there all day long. You would die and go to hell.

And the reason you would die and go to hell is because being lost has *nothing* to do with anything you do after you're born. People are not sinners because they sin- they sin because they are already depraved and fallen sinners anyway. So visible and tangible acts of sin are simply the outward manifestation of the reality of already having a fallen and depraved nature and of being separated from God. Being lost and fallen and sinful and depraved has to do with being conceived in your mother's womb through the seed of your father, and every single human on earth who is conceived is conceived in sin and lost by virtue of having a human father.

So when people tell you that they can't help doing some sinful act- that they are born that way, or that it is their *nature* to act this way, or they are *inclined* to act this way- they're telling you the truth.

Everybody on earth is born in sin, and they are conceived in sin and iniquity, and *everybody* has the very same rebellious nature of Adam in them that loves darkness rather than light and that enjoys their sin. And the only difference between all of the unsaved and lost people on the earth is in *how* they manifest their fallen and depraved nature.

And even though human society seeks to make distinctions between various acts born out of a fallen and depraved nature- God does

not. Society *elevates* one sin above the other and they *excuse* one sin while punishing another. But as far as God is concerned- every single act by every single unsaved person is sinful. Here is the insulting and staggering indictment against all humanity that God gave to Moses in **Genesis 6:5**:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

So fallen and lost people are "all evil- all the time". There is no inherent nobility or goodness in humanity- none. And, therefore- we cannot come into right standing with God based upon *anything* that we do for ourselves- precisely because *everything* we do is corrupt and evil. Which is why the Apostle Paul gave this scathing report in **Romans 3:10b-18**

**10 ..."THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."
13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";
14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";
15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,
17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."
18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."**

And the sobering conclusion of this indictment is:

Romans 3:9b

... both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) are all under sin;

But why is it so important to know this? *Why* is our fallen and sinful condition being part and parcel to our original birth and

conception absolutely *mandatory* to understand in connection with the Kingdom of God? Because of what Paul taught in **Romans 3:19b**

... so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable [guilty] to [before] God;

God ordained all things to work this way so that every mouth that would speak up to protest their own inherent goodness or lay claim to being in right standing with God based on something that they did- are silenced and this allows for the entire world to stand guilty and accountable to God. So by this being true- every single soul that is saved- is saved by Grace and through Faith in the finished Work of Christ alone- absent any and all human works- so that God receives all the Glory and Man receives none.

So the offensive reality of our lost and fallen condition- that is so maligned today, and that is so resisted- is the one thing that people do not want to hear. But that is the very Truth that brings all people to the knowledge of their great need for a merciful Savior- Who will wash away all their sins and Who will forgive all their iniquities and Who will cleanse them to the uttermost- if they will repent and trust in the finished Work of Christ by faith. And the Bible says that Jesus will do that to the Gentile as well as to the Jew- which was radical Theology when it was first preached.

And the Bible goes on to say that Jesus will do this *regardless* of how bad they have been and Jesus will do that *regardless* of how long they have been that bad. But if someone refuses to repent, if they seek to bargain with God so they can keep some of their sin or continue to live as they did- if they seek to save themselves by doing good deeds and not trusting in the finished Work of Christ by faith- they will die in their sins and they will never see the Kingdom of God. And that will be true of both Jew and Gentile as well.

And this causes everyone to know that in addition to being born in iniquity and conceived in sin through the seed of their natural father- that they must also be **“born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1Peter 1:23)**

So it is very important to know that just as people manifest various sinful inclinations due to the fact that they were born with

Original Sin- it is *also* true that people will manifest various godly inclinations due to the fact that they have been born again. And two of those inclinations will be:

1. They will love and seek to obey Jesus Christ
2. They will love and seek to obey God's Word

And this very important to know because the Jews thought that when Messiah came- that they were all going to be embraced and welcomed into the Kingdom- for no other reason than their Abrahamic ancestry. You see, Jews believed then, and now, that they are saved by birthright. That their Jewishness and their natural bloodline connection to Abraham makes them to be saved. So instead of believing what David and Moses wrote – that they were lost and fallen through their conception and birth- the Jews of Jesus' Day were deceived into believing that they were saved and redeemed through their natural conception and birth. And this is why it was so insulting and staggering to the Jew to hear Jesus say to them,

John 3:3

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

So Jesus attacked their false doctrine head on and made it clear that they were not saved by their physical and natural birthright- which is why they loved Him so much. Because it was this false teaching about Salvation that allowed the Jew to think that the Coming of the Messiah was going to be a great celebration. They thought it was going to be a party to end all parties- that it was going to be a great triumph.

So Jesus is telling these Jews again here in **Luke 17:20-23** that the only way that they can get into the Kingdom of God is by being born again. Because they were looking for the wrong manifestation of His Coming. The Jew was looking for the *second* manifestation of the Kingdom- when Jesus comes *back* as King of all other kings and Lord of all other lords. What they didn't know but what we must know is that *first* comes the *spiritual* Kingdom. *First* comes the rule and reign of Christ in the hearts of individuals through the miracle of the New

Birth. And only those who are part of *that* spiritual Kingdom in *this* life- will ever enter into the Kingdom that is coming. Only those who are a part of the *personal* Kingdom- that is growing one soul at a time- will be in the *universal* Kingdom.

The spiritual Kingdom of God is growing one soul at a time until it's complete. And when it's complete, it will be time for Christ to come back to judge all the ungodly. And the ungodly are defined as those who refuse to repent and trust in Jesus. So there will be no ungodly people in that Kingdom- meaning that there will be no one in that Kingdom who has not already been born again and had the old nature that they were originally born with replaced with a new nature that they received in the New Birth. And so our Lord is saying to them that if you're not in the spiritual Kingdom by virtue of the New Birth- then you will never even see the glorious fulfillment of all those Old Testament Promises.

So that is the first thing we need to determine- who the people are that Jesus is coming back for. Just who are God's people? Who are the people who will be with Jesus in the Kingdom? You see, Jesus is coming back for only those that are His. So He is coming back for His people- His chosen people- His redeemed people. So Jesus is coming back for all those who are born again and justified. And it doesn't matter what nationality they are, it doesn't matter what language they speak, or whether they are male or female, or whether they are educated or cultured or not. Jesus is coming back for His people.

But then that also means that He is *not* coming back for anyone else. And so all those who are not saved will be judged by Jesus when He returns. And that means that all the followers of all the world's religions will be judged. And that means that those who labor so very hard to be nice and good and noble and honorable people will be judged. And that means that all those who don't believe in anything will be judged as well. Because simply *not* believing in something doesn't stop it from being true. And so those who take such pride in being so analytical and those who like to boast about their superior intelligence- who laughed at the notion of the Son of God coming back to this earth to judge all the ungodly will be judged by the God they didn't believe in.

And most people would agree with that. But what this also means is that the moral soldier- who fought bravely for his country and displayed great heroism, and yet who was unsaved will be judged as

well. And it also means the nice person who tried to help other people but was unsaved will be judged, too. And it means the high school straight "A" student who everybody liked and who had great plans to be a doctor but who never bowed his knee to Jesus will be judged. And it means the kind and loving mother who raised her children to be good people but who was never born again will be judged as well.

You see, it isn't only the mass murderers or the child rapists or the terrorists who will be judged when Jesus comes back. It is *all* who are lost. It is *everyone* who has not been born again. It is *all* who refused to repent and who do not seek to follow and obey Jesus. And the Bible calls every single person on planet earth who does not repent and trust in Jesus "ungodly".

And that's a hard sell for us who live in the Deep South because down here we have this thing called "Southern Morality" where the thought is that as long as you say "Yes Sir" and "No Ma'am", and as long as you're polite and salute the flag and as long as you go to Church and watch Fox News that you're okay with God. But the Bible says that if you don't repent you are arrogant and self-righteous. And the Bible says that if you don't trust in the finished Work of Jesus- you're fighting *against* Grace. And the Bible calls people like that- "ungodly". And let me show you exactly what I mean by this. Look again at **Luke 17:26-30**.

26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

Now notice that Jesus illustrates how it will be when He returns by using two Old Testament people and two Old Testament incidents:

1. Noah
2. Lot

And both of these men saw cataclysmic Judgment. Noah saw the flooding of the entire earth, while Lot saw God rain down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. But the Judgment that will arrive with the Second Coming of Jesus will make both of these events seem like a picnic.

But now look closely at verses 27-29 as Jesus describes what was happening just before God judged the earth with Noah.

27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

Another version of this very same point is found over in **Matthew 24:37-39** where Jesus said,

37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

38 "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Now these two passages do not describe wild, drunken orgies where there is free flowing liquor and sex as is commonly thought. What Jesus is saying here is that life will be going on in a normal way just before the Judgment. People will be fixing and eating meals; there will be discussions going on around the dinner table; young people will be getting married with all the happy excitement and sweet expectations that surround marriages. People will be entering into business contracts and will be buying their dream homes while others

will be selling property to realize their own dreams. And what this all means is that life will be going on just as it always has.

Nobody realized, as they woke up that day, that this was the Day of the Lord. Now they should have realized it- because it has been preached for 2,000 consecutive years that Jesus was coming at a day that you least expect it. But the majority of people who heard that didn't really believe it, and so they went about their lives as though nothing was going to happen and as though there is no Day of Calamity coming- just like the people of both Noah and Lot's day did.

Now what this means, dear friends, is that the people who are caught unaware when the Lord returns are no different than the people of Noah and Lot's day. And that means that they are lost and that they will all be judged. Saved people look for the Return of their Savior with great anticipation. Saved people don't forget about the Coming of the Lord. Saved people do not get caught up with the affairs of this life to the point where they are caught unaware. Saved people are constantly praying, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" Saved people are anxiously looking for His return. Saved people are even fasting for the Return of Jesus. So they don't forget. They don't allow the things of this life and the pleasures of this world and the attractions that are passing away to gloss over their eyes to the point where they forget.

You see, saved people are in their Bibles and so they are constantly feeding on Divine Truth that tells them that the Lord is nigh- even at the door- so don't get caught up in the affairs of this life- but live holy and godly and separated lives down here. And saved people are down on the floor praying and they are constantly being prompted by the Spirit of God and constantly being convicted by the Comforter to not sin and to prepare for the Lord's Return. And saved people are engaged in godly times of fellowship where they are constantly being reminded by other believers to stay sharp and not to be overtaken by the cares of this life. And as saved people regularly partake of the Lord's Supper- they hear the Word of the Lord, "**Do this in remembrance of Me!**" or *"Do this till I come back!"* And saved people are constantly telling other people, *"The Lord is coming, get ready, cease from sin, prepare yourselves! Hurry! The Lord is coming!"* And saved people do not forsake the assembling of themselves together and so they hear clay pots preach the Gospel and they are reminded constantly that the Day

of the Lord is at hand! So saved people don't forget about the Coming of the Lord!

So what this means is that being caught unaware when the Lord comes back is a sign of being lost. Forgetting about what Jesus specifically told us not to forget about is a sign that you don't really believe in Jesus or on what He said. Forgetting to keep yourselves unspotted from the world and getting caught up in worldly pleasure and the lust of riches and the lusts of the flesh to the degree that the Coming of the Lord is not even on your mind shows that you're not born again.

And so the people of Noah's day perished. And the people of Lot's day perished. And the people who live their lives like Lot's wife perished. And this means that they were lost. They were not saved. They were born once- but not twice. And when the Lord visited them- they all died in their sins.

And so Jesus says that everything will be going on just like any other day and all these various activities that people do in normal, every-day life will be going on- just like nothing is going to happen. Except on that day- Divine Judgment has come upon them. And so every single one of their plans have been interrupted. And all of their activities are stopped. And all of the futures of all of those people have been determined. Judgment has come. It has come suddenly. Now is the time when God is judging the earth. That is what Jesus is saying here. And every single soul who has not repented and put their trust in Jesus *before* this moment are doomed.

And at that moment- nothing matters but who is saved and who is not. Nothing matters except who has been faithful and who has not. Nothing matters except who is born again and who is yet in their sins.

And even though it is common today to hear people say, "*That's not fair!*" concerning the Doctrines of Grace- you have never heard such a cry of "*That's not fair!*" that you will hear on the Day that Jesus comes back as all the unsaved will begin to realize their fate.

And so God is *not* concerned with repopulating the geographical nation of Israel with people who lay claim to being Jews. That is *not* the coming of the Kingdom of God- as some teach. God is concerned with both Jews and Gentiles being born again through a sovereign Act of God the Holy Spirit where our old Adamic nature is replaced with a new divine nature. God is concerned that both Jews and Gentiles

repent and trust in Jesus Christ and become justified before God. God is *not* concerned that the Jews gather back in Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple so they can glory in the Revelation of the Old Covenant with animal sacrifices and a restored Levitical priesthood- as so many teach today. God is concerned that Jews utterly *abandon* the *inferior* Revelation of the Old Covenant and fully embrace the *superior* Revelation of the New Covenant that is based on *infinitely* superior Promises, brought about through an *infinitely* superior High Priest- Who offered an *infinitely* superior Sacrifice.

So I do *not* rejoice that the Jews are going back to their homeland- as though that in and of itself allows them to somehow be in right standing before God. I rejoice only when Jews come into the Church of Jesus Christ through being born again and justified through the Life, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will never be a citizen of the natural state of Israel and yet I am saved. But unless the Jew becomes a member of the Church of Jesus- they will never see Heaven- even though they can be a citizen of Israel.

So I do not see the Jews over in Israel working hard to restore the Levitical priesthood as humbly following the Commands of God. I see them as rebelling *against* the Command of God to bow before Jesus, and I see them being arrogant by refusing to be led by God's Spirit to embrace the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. Turn with me to read **Hebrews 7**.

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, [Genesis 14]

2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation *of his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.

7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.

8 In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.

9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes,

10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

16 who has become *such* not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

17 For it is attested *of Him*, "***YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.***" [Psalm 110]

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

20 And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath

21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "***THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'***");

22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

23 The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing,

24 but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever.

Jesus Christ came to this earth- fully God and fully man without conflict or contradiction and lived a sinless Life. This same Jesus died for sin and rose from the dead three days later as the Affirmation of the Father's Satisfaction of His Life and Ministry and Sacrifice in order that He might provide the means by which anyone- Jew or Gentile- could come into His spiritual Kingdom, or that His spiritual Kingdom could come into them as we are indwelt by the Trinity.

And these people are known throughout Scripture as:

- ✓ The Elect of God (**Colossians 3:12**)
- ✓ The Chosen of God (**Titus 1:1**)
- ✓ The True Jew (**Romans 2:28&29**)
- ✓ The Israel of God (**Galatians 6:16**)

... or as the Apostle Peter put it in **1Peter 2:9&10**

9 But you are *A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION*, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 for you once were *NOT A PEOPLE*, but now you are *THE PEOPLE OF GOD*; you had *NOT RECEIVED MERCY*, but now you have *RECEIVED MERCY*.

And Peter is not talking about a future nation of Israel here- he is talking about the Church- the place where *all* of God's people are

located. All of them. And while you can and you should join the Covenant of Peace Church- you are *already* a member of Christ's invisible and eternal Church- if you have been truly born again and have repented of sin and are actively seeking to obey Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master.

And so the Bible teaches that it is the people of the Church who are the people of God. The Holy Scriptures teach that it is the people of the Church who are the elect and the chosen race and the royal priesthood and the holy nation. The Bible says that it is the people of the Christian Church who are the people who were not a people but who are now the people of God and the Word of the living God says that it is the people of the Church who are the people who had not received Mercy but who have now received Mercy.

So ever since the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead- nationality and race and ethnicity and language and gender and politics and financial wherewithal and education and culture- all the things that divide and separate the people of the world- are entirely and absolutely *irrelevant* to God. So the people who are the "people of God" are *not* the people who are born in a particular ethnic group- but are the people who are born again by the Spirit of the living God.

Jesus Christ is building His Church, and He is building His Church with the lively stones of Man out of every tribe and out of every nation and out of every language and out of every kind of people and the very gates of Hades itself will not prevail against the Church that Christ is building!

And every single human being on earth is welcome to come into Christ's Church- every single person on earth is welcome to enter into Heaven itself- regardless of your background and regardless of your sin. But you have to come His Way or you don't come at all. You have to come His Way- the Way of denying yourself and of talking up your Cross and of following Him. You have to come the Way of being broken and contrite and of trembling at His Word. You have to come the Way of repenting of sin and trusting in the finished Work of Jesus Christ. You have to come the Way of not loving money. You have to come the Way of hating every evil thing. You have to come the Way of not loving the world. You have to come the Way of ongoing humility and ongoing repentance and ongoing obedience. You have to come the Way of bearing spiritual fruit. And you have to come the Way of *actively*

rejecting sin and of *actively* running away from sinful lusts and of *actively* pursuing godly purity and Biblical Holiness. So you have to come His Way- or you don't come at all.

And yet the great mystery is that the people who *should* have come- didn't. The people who *should* have worshipped Jesus the best, the people who *should* have embraced Him the easiest, the people who *should* have heard Jesus first- are the very people who rejected Him the most. And their rejection was complete and it was total. Not only did they doubt what Jesus said- they *rejected* what He said. Not only did they *not* embrace what Jesus did- they categorized what He did as being false. And not only did they *not* worship Who Jesus was- they called Him satan.

And they did all of this- in the "Name" of God. They did all this in the "name" of being faithful to the Old Testament. But the Old Testament spoke about Jesus and it predicted His Arrival and the Covenant and the Kingdom that He would bring with Him. But because they were never of God to begin with- because they were never at any time the Chosen people of God- they could not hear Him; they could not receive Him; they could not embrace Him; and they could not love Him. The Apostle John said

John 1:11-13

11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

13 who were born, not of blood [natural descent] nor of the will of the flesh [human decision] nor of the will of man [husband's will], but of God.

These are the people who will be with Jesus forever in His Kingdom. The people who are in the spiritual Kingdom with Jesus now- are the ones who will be in the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns. And everybody else will be thrust out.

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.