

God Wants A People

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As We hear God saying, *"For you are a holy people unto the Lord your God: The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth."* (Deut. 7:6-ff.) So, while there are many lessons to learn here about the kind of people God wants, the underlying point is clear. What God wanted from Israel was "a people." And in the end, isn't that what God has always wanted?

When Hosea prophesied that Gentiles would be acceptable to God, he said, "...and I will say to them that were not my people, You are my people; and they shall say, You are my God." (Hosea.2:23; Rom. 9:25.) It wasn't just Israel that God was after but out of all nations God is looking for servants.

God wants people!! His creatures, made in His image, have sinned and turned from Him but the Father gave His Son to die on the cross because He loved us, and wants us to return to the fold. He does not want our money. He does not need anything "seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts.17:25). He wants us because He loves us and doesn't want to leave us lost in sin (Jn.3:16). Have we grown so calloused we cannot be moved by such an unselfish love?

God wants a people, to dwell in them. We hear Jesus say, "If anyone love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (Jn.14:23). In Heb. 8:10, the Lord says, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." In order for God to dwell with his people, those people must be loving enough to learn from and keep the words of the Lord, having written in the deepest part of their hearts. We read a beautiful picture in Revelation 21:3 about God being with His people, "He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." And God can and will dwell among his people when they humble themselves to obey his will. So, from Old Testament to New Testament, we see God wanting a people in loving fellowship with Himself because they learn of Him and seek to be like Him.

But very often, we are keen to quote a bunch of verses about being God's people but that is not enough. We quote verses about loving God and everyone knows the plan of salvation verses for sure. We speak of the Lord's death in hushed tones but we will never grasp the true significance of the scheme of redemption until we make it a very personal matter.

Sometimes Christians don't like to talk about having a "personal relationship" with the Lord because of what many other religions present the topic. But part and parcel to being the people of God is the personal relationship. One who has come to God through Jesus to the cross and has responded in faith, repentance, and baptism as the word of God directs, seeks to expand that initial obedience by growing into the qualities of God. All who do so are God's people.

God is not after fine church buildings, churches with big bank accounts, great numbers for numbers sake. God wants a people -- who are truly his own.