

God's People

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

John 17:6-19

Last week, we explored the teaching of Jesus in His prayer to His Father, where He states that believers are “*not of this world*.” This week, we will unpack the truth that believers are “*God’s People*.” Specifically, God’s people are a gift to the Son, whom He will ultimately present back to the Father as a gift of praise and honor. The Lord Jesus Christ is to prepare the people whom the Father has gifted to Him.

H. A. Ironside (1876–1951), in his Ephesians teaching, pictures a sinner approaching the door of salvation. Over the door he sees: “*Whosoever will, let him come*” (Rev. 22:17). He enters by faith, the door closes behind him, and when he turns and looks back, he reads on the inside: “*Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*” (Eph. 1:4). Ironside’s point: the gospel offer is genuinely open to all, and only after coming to Christ do we discover we were eternally chosen.

The truths we are seeing are “*counter-intuitive wonders*,” as John Piper calls them. We can understand them, but we face insurmountable challenges in our human attempts to reconcile them with one another. Instead, we see through a dark lens. **1 Corinthians 13:12**, *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.* As much as God reveals to man in Scripture, we will never know His mind completely **Romans 11:33**, *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

I. What Distinguishes God’s People From People of the World?

- A. God’s people were given to God’s Son, “*out of the world*.” **John 17:6** “*I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.*” (See Also: **John 17:2**; **John 17:9**; **John 17:11**; **John 17:12**; **John 17:24**)
 - 1. The Gospel of John passages outside of our current passage:
 - a) **John 6:37**, *All that the Father gives me will come to me* {God’s foreknowledge/ordaining}, *and whoever comes* {Human will} *to me I will never cast out.* (See **John 6:39**; **John 10:29**)
 - 2. Scripture in the New Testament
 - a) **Ephesians 1:3-14**, In Greek, this is one monumental doxology in one sentence.
 - b) See also: **2 Timothy 2:19**; **Hebrews 2:13**; **1 Peter 2:9** cf. **Exodus 19:5-6**)
- B. The Old Testament Example of Abraham
 - 1. Abram came “*out of the world*.” **Joshua 24:2**, *And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.’*
 - 2. God called Abram and set him apart from the world. **Hebrews 11:8**, *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.* (See also Genesis 12:1-3)

II. The Nature of God’s Gift to the Son

- A. The gift was chosen before the foundation of the earth
 - 1. **Ephesians 1:4**, *Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*
 - 2. **2 Timothy 1:9**, *Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*
 - 3. The examples of Jeremiah and Paul.
 - a) **Jeremiah 1:5**, *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”*
 - b) **Galatians 1:15-16**, *But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;*
- B. The gift was chosen without respect to any future merit or works.
 - 1. God’s people do not belong to a Pharisaical clubhouse; we are not to think in some superior way, “*I thank God that I am not like that other man.*” In the truest sense, “*All have sinned and fall short of*

the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) 2 Timothy 1:9, Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works... Titus 3:5, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy...

2. It was in our sin, arrogance, pride, rebellion, disobedience, wrathful disposition, spiritual deadness, lusts, self-will, that God chose the gift to give to the Son. **Romans 5:8**, *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
 - a) **Ephesians 2:4–5**, *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses,*
 - b) **Psalm 51:5**, *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
 - c) **John 3:16**, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
- C. God delights in the gift given to the Son
 1. **Ephesians 1:16–23; Esp. vss. 18–20**, *Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,*
- D. The Son came that the Gift might be presented back to the Father.
 1. **1 Corinthians 15:22–24**, *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.*

III. Light for our Path – Security in this world.

- A. When salvation starts with human need rather than God’s plan, it is hopelessly inadequate and can quickly undermine God’s sovereignty.
- B. The free offer of the gospel extends to everyone. “*Whosoever will may come.*” (**Matt 28:18–20**)
 1. In his sermon “God’s Will and Man’s Will”, Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892) addresses the fact that Scripture makes clear that people are invited freely: “*Whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely.*” According to this ... it appears clear enough that men are not saved by compulsion. ... We are not saved against our will; ... Nor again ... is the will taken away; ... when he turns the slave into a child ... he does not ... pluck out the will which he possesses. ... The Lord speaks to you this morning ... and says — “*Whosoever will let him come.*” ... To take that water is simply to trust Christ ...
- C. Human will is not nullified by the Father’s gift to the Son.
 1. No person has ever been saved against their will or without the Spirit’s conviction of sin.
 2. To be saved, one must respond willingly in repentance and faith.
- D. In consideration of this truth, who should God’s people be?
 1. When we realize whose we are, God’s people, one of His children, holiness is a result. **Leviticus 11:44**, *For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.*
 2. **1 John 3:2–3**, *Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*
 3. **1 Peter 2:9**, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*