

A PECULIAR PEOPLE

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People

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PART ONE

Called to be His People



THE INITIATIVE IS OF GOD

God has revealed His heart's desire to man in every book of the Bible. It is clear that God's desire has always been to have a people whom He could call His own — a people raised up in His own image and after His own likeness (*Genesis 1:26*). God longs to have a people who would be known as His very own.

God demonstrated His desire for a people who would be His own, by calling the Israelites out of their bondage in Egypt so that they may walk in His ways. He called them out of Egypt that they may become a nation 'above all other nations'. He chose and separated the Israelites that they may be a people unto Him; He brought them out of Egypt so that He may school them in His ways and purposes; and that they may be a people unlike any other people inhabiting the earth - a 'peculiar' people unto God. Their destiny was to be a people who are His very own.



WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE HIM ALONE

In the days of Samuel, the prophet, God spoke to the Israelite nation through this man of God and told them what He expected of them. Samuel proclaimed God's counsel to the people.

“And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. (1 Samuel 7:3-4)

God wanted His people to put away the strange gods (idols) from their lives. He wanted them to prepare themselves to serve Him alone. God promised to deliver the children of Israel out of the hand of their arch enemies, the Philistines, if they would only return unto Him and serve Him only.

Even in this hour God promises to deliver us from our enemies. He will surely honour His promises and give us the promised victory, if we follow Him wholeheartedly.

When the children of Israel had put away the idols, Baalim and Ashtaroth and when they began to serve the Lord wholly, then He answered their prayers and fulfilled His promises to them.



that we are to possess, in the words of Apostle Paul “the enmity that is in the flesh”. We are to throw out every enemy, be they Jebusites or Amorites or Perisites that posses this land or body of ours. In our lives, Philistines represent the enemy elements that always attack from outside, such as circumstances and situations or even people who are opposed to our life in the Lord. These are which come from outside. However, Amorites present a picture of our flesh, which is within, that war against our spiritual man. The children of Israel defeated the Philistines but they lived at peace with the Amorites, the very enemy that possessed their own lands. The Scripture says, “There was peace between Israel and Amorites”!

We often overcome the enemy who attacks us from outside (through our circumstance, families etc.) but we fail to achieve victory over the enemy who attacks us from within, that is through the flesh. The personal lives of many believers show that they are not bothered about the desires of their flesh. It is truly a battle of a spiritual nature. The Apostle Paul makes this clear in the book of Romans. *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”* (Romans 8:13). Beloved, if we are truly led by the Spirit of God, we will conquer the flesh. We will certainly put to death the works of the flesh – and annihilate the so called ‘Amorites’.

The Israelites, in Samuel’s time were victorious against the Philistines but they felt that their enemies, the Amorites, didn’t present any problem. This is the exact state of many



Why did the Israelites desire to have an earthly king?

In *Judges* 21:25 it is written that, in those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes. From time to time God had brought forth 'judges' to rule Israelites and deliver them from their enemies. But there had never been an earthly king. God was the King of the children of Israel. However, the people turned away from their true King and did what they thought was right, according to their own understanding. They did not want God to be their king. They felt they were quite capable of taking care of themselves. When the people of God began to walk in their own ways and strayed away from the ways of God, several enemies came upon them. When times of affliction came they would cry out to Jehovah, but when they were delivered by the mighty hand of God they remembered not their Saviour. How reminiscent of our times!

In the closing days of Judges, there was a great famine in the land (*Ruth* 1:1). The enemy, in the form of a famine, attacked the children of Israel. There was no word from the Lord at that time. But then God raised up Samuel to help and encourage the people to live according to His ways. The Lord God spoke through the prophet and told the Israelites to discard their strange gods and serve Him alone. The people obeyed and followed the Lord; thus they were victorious in their battles. Things began to go well for the children of God. "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life" (*I Samuel* 7:15).

One day, however, the elders of Israel asked Samuel the



doing and they long to do what they do. They harbour and nourish a complaining spirit; they envy their neighbours; they compare themselves to the ungodly; they long to imitate their superficial ways and they itch to adopt their colorful customs.

When Samuel heard the complaints of the Israelites and their request for a king, he was greatly disturbed in the spirit. With grief and sorrow within, He took the matter to the Lord.

“But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.” (1 Samuel 8:6-7).

O how this must have grieved the Lord! The very people whom He had delivered out of Egypt by His might and power were now ready to reject Him! The Lord God of Israel ministered to Samuel and told him to listen to the people for in asking for a king they hadn't rejected Samuel but they had in fact, rejected the heavenly King who had ruled and reigned over His people all these years after they had come out of Egypt. The Israelites had turned away from their true heavenly King. They had rejected God's counsel and drawn away from His purposes. This is the attitude that is so prevalent this day in the Christian realm. In trying to do what others do, we reject God's rule upon our lives.

“And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner



to be the subjects of an earthly king, despite the manner of king he would be! They were willing to suffer the loss of their sheep, their harvest, their lands and their children to have an earthly king.

How blind one can be! How sightless one can be towards the interests of God! How insensitive one can get to the interests of Christ!

Despite what God had done for them as a nation, the Israelites did not want God to be their King! The natural man may yet think that there was nothing wrong in the Israelites asking for a king if they so wished. They may think that the earthly and the heavenly kings could function simultaneously; that both could exist side by side. But the spiritual man knows that by asking for an earthly king he is rejecting the rule of the King of kings in his life. Beloved, as Jesus said, one cannot serve two masters.

God had brought His people out of Egypt that they may be a nation unto Him. God's desire and plan for His people was that they should become a nation, unlike the other nations. He had called them out of Egypt with a high calling. However, the people clamoured for a king they would be able to see! They chose not to walk in the liberty that God had given them. God does not call His people to be anything but the very best. Yet so often, we choose the second best and walk in our own ways!

It is interesting to note the reasons people gave for



The second reason given by the Israelites to reject God as their King was that they may have a king to judge over them. They preferred to have a mortal king judge them instead of God, who is ever so just and righteous! They wanted a physical, visible king to judge and decide their fate. In their day-to-day disputes and problems, they wanted the help of an earthly king! They didn't want to live by the inherent, righteous laws laid down by God, but instead wanted to place their trust in the hands of a man! Are God's judgments not righteous? Yes, they are, but the people wanted to be able to justify their misdeeds before mortal men! Were they not looking for shortcuts to true righteousness and justice? O, how corrupt and self seeking are the ways of man, beloved?

The most preposterous reason put forward by the Israelites for rejecting God was that they may have a king to lead them into battle. They wanted a man as king to lead them into battle although the Lord had been with them and had fought all their enemies. They forgot that the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, to deliver them out of the hands of the enemies of Israel.

"And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe." (1 Samuel 12:11).

After asking the prophet Samuel to give them a king, did the Israelites get a king who would rule over them? Yes, God gave Israel a king in Saul.

"And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed

When we are born again in Christ, the Word of God says that we become a peculiar people unto God. We are a chosen generation – a people called out by God from darkness into His likeness.

The word ‘peculiar’ means uncommon, different from anything else. Every born again child of God is called to be a peculiar person unto God. We are not to be like other people of this world. We are called to be a special people for God. This is just like the calling that rested upon the children of Israel in the Old Covenant.

In the book of Deuteronomy, we read, “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” (Deuteronomy 14:2).

The Scriptures point out very clearly that God calls His people to be a holy people, a chosen people, a peculiar people unto Himself, different to other nations. The Israelites had forgotten that God had commanded them to be a peculiar people unto Himself unlike other people.

In the book of Exodus, the Lord says, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. 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”. (Exodus 19:4, 5).



wanting to build houses, establish projects and raise buildings because that is the craze in the society. In the process of doing these things and endeavoring to copy worldly people, they are drawn to many unscriptural activities and fail to honour God's principles. Thus they cease to be special, peculiar and unique unto the Lord. They forsake the rule of God in their lives and try to be like others who do not even know the Lord. They are dominated by society. They look to people to meet their needs instead of looking unto God. It is sad to see how many believers are living like the people of the world, forgetting the calling of God upon their lives. They are prepared to suffer so that their earthly needs are met – a house, a car or such other comforts – but they are not prepared to suffer for the sake of the Lord. They are prepared to stagnate in their spiritual life provided they have some tangible outward evidence of the blessings of God.

OUR CALLING IS IN CHRIST JESUS

Beloved, God does not want us to imitate others. He wants us to be like Him. By asking for things that the world wants we reject God; and the Lord will be prompted to say, "...they have rejected Me that I shouldn't reign over them" (1 *Samuel* 8:7).

Many believers acquire houses, cars and other earthly things to match the possessions of worldly people. They try to live up to the standards set by the society. And then they testify saying, "We were without house, but God provided



PART TWO

Called to be His Bride



I shall be a God in your midst. All other people shall see My excellence and My riches in you.” God’s desire hasn’t changed, beloved. He has the very same desire in the New Covenant age.

In *Ephesians* 3:8 we read that God wants to reveal His many-sided wisdom to the people, and to the powers and the principalities through His chosen ones. Beloved, God’s desire to show forth His glory unto the universe is an unchanging one.

In *Ephesians* Chapter 1 it is clear that God has chosen His people before the foundation of the world, so that He may dwell in their midst, so that through His people He may show forth His excellence, His glory, His majestic riches and His wonderful ways. We are called to testify of Him.

THE PRIVILEGE OF KNOWING HIM

King Ahasuerus had a queen whose name was Vashti (*Esther* 1:9). Queen Vashti had the privilege of knowing the king. She lived in the King’s palace along with the king. Vashti provides us on one hand a picture of the Israelites who had the privilege of knowing God as their Lord. She also typifies on the other hand, the modern day church that has the privilege of knowing the Lord.

Vashti didn’t appreciate the great privilege she had as the queen of the land. She neglected her great calling. She was not really living according to the King’s desires and will. We

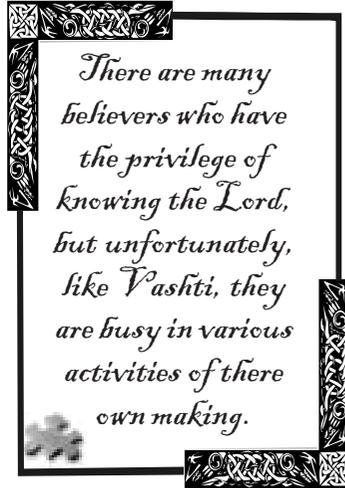


Psalm 45 depicts the great beauty of the children of God. The Lord desires to show forth His glory and His, beauty and majesty through His people.

“Hearken O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear, forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle work; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.” (Psalms 45:10, 11, 14, and 17).

The Apostle Paul writes that a believer in Christ is called forth “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved” (*Ephesians 1:6*). He adds that we should “be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ” (*Ephesians 1:12*). We are to show forth the glory and praise of our King.

There are many believers who have the privilege of knowing the Lord, but unfortunately, like Vashti, they are busy in various activities of there own making. They have



Jesus told the Jews that He knew whose children they were for they were pretenders and hypocrites. They were not the true sons of Abraham, they were the children of them who killed the prophets (*Matthew 23:31*).

The Jews thought they were the children of God but they didn't walk according to God's commandments and expectations. Hence, the children of natural Israel were rejected by God. They felt secure and comfortable by virtue of their heritage, but it proved to be a false sense of comfort. Many believers, today, have a false sense of security. They are content to be part of God's kingdom; they feel secure in God's house; they feel they cannot be removed from their place in Christ. They feel secure because of their past experiences, but they don't see the need of having a living relationship with the Lord. They are quite content to be involved in church activities; they derive satisfaction from attending all the church events. They attend Bible studies regularly; they occupy their regular seat on Sundays; they tithe habitually; they even help needy souls occasionally. Yes, they are satisfied that they are able to maintain spiritual status-quo! However, the reality is that they have become complacent, self-satisfied and conceited. Every believer needs to examine himself carefully to guard against any attitude of self-satisfaction. Do you have a false sense of comfort and security in Christ Jesus?

Beloved, our security lies not in our activities, the songs of praise we sing or even the quality of our worship. Nor does our security rest in what we have experienced in the past (e.g. baptism). Our security lies in being counted in that



The Scripture say that just because queen Vashti did not respond to the king's calling, nor appreciate his will for her, the place of her privilege was given to another queen—one who would be better (more obedient) than her. Vashti forfeited her place (in the palace), her position (as one who was living with the king) and her possessions (her royal estate) due to her disobedience. She had lived under a false sense of security and hence the Queen's robe and estates were removed from her and given to someone who would be worthy of those privileges.

God has called us into a high calling in Christ Jesus. The Israelites and the Jews in not accepting Jesus, didn't meet God's desire. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans Chapter 11 that God rejected the Pharisees and Jews and instead called the Gentiles to be a people unto God. Similarly, Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:10, "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : which hadn't o tamed mercy but row have obtained mercy." The Scripture says that we were not a people (unto God) but now we have been called to be a people unto God. In a spiritual sense, we have been called to take the place of Vashti in the Kingdom of God.

After giving the example of natural Israel in Romans 11, Paul writes,

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the



examine himself in every detail, so that he wouldn't be the one to lose the race.

The Amplified Bible explains verse 27 thus, "But (like a boxer) I buffet my body – handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships – and subdue it for fear that after proclaiming to others the Gospel and other things pertaining to it, I myself should become unfit – not stand the test and be unapproved – and rejected (as a counterfeit)."

Paul always guarded himself against the danger of becoming complacent and presumptuous. How much more should we be alert against just such a danger? Let us be careful that we don't become like Vashti. May the Lord help us to have a greater appreciation of His calling upon our lives. And may we ever be mindful of the danger of taking our calling for granted.

There are many Christians who are caught up in various religious activities such as conferences, crusades and conventions. They are like Vashti – they are people who are engaged in activities of their own making. Although they are occupied in the activities of the church, yet they fail to respond to God's high calling to show forth His glory and excellence and manifold wisdom.

There are others who listen to God's Word, but they are unable to appreciate what God is telling them in this hour. Often, they hear His word clearly, but they fail to obey God. Hence there is no change in their style of life. They continue to live exactly as they had been doing for many years! They



was linked with the king's name for some time. However, now that she had been rejected, she needed to remove her jewels and give them to the new queen, for the king wanted to show forth his exceeding great beauty through his wife.

God is searching for the right kind of bride for His Son these days. Those who were once a privileged people (the Jews), do not qualify to be the bride for His Son, for they desired to walk in their own ways. Many are called but few are chosen. God's Spirit is still looking for an appropriate bridal company for His Son. He is searching all the earth for a bridal people that would stand in the very likeness of the Bridegroom, in character, in holiness and in purity.

Beloved, the Spirit of God is really looking for an appropriate Bride these days just as Eliezer of God looked out for a bride (Genesis 24) for Isaac in the last days of Abraham. Some scoff at this; others may doubt this; but there will be some who will appreciate and understand the move of God in this hour.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians and told them that they hadn't really appreciated God's high calling in their lives. In II Corinthians 11:1-2 we read, *"I wish you would bear with me while I indulge in a little (so-called) foolishness. Do bear with me. For I am zealous for you with a godly eagerness and a divine jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one Husband, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ."*

The Corinthians had been blessed with the gifts of the



Which father would like to see his grown-up son roaming about in questionable places with unchaste women? So also, the heart of the Father would be grieved to see His Son in the company of a woman who is not pure and chaste. In the book of *James* Chapter 4, verse 4 we read, *"You (are like) unfaithful wives (having illicit love affairs with the world) breaking your marriage vow to God. Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So, whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God."* (*Amplified Bible*). The Living Bible puts it this way, *"You are like unfaithful wives who love their husband's enemy"*.

Remember that the Church is normally depicted as a woman and a bride in the Bible. If we are friendly with the world then we could well be likened to unfaithful wives who love their husband's enemy. This is the condition of the Church today. She is friendly with world, the enemy of God, the Father.

What happens in the world under such conditions of disloyalty and infidelity? The husband would surely divorce his wife if she flirts with others or is a friend to his enemy. He would throw her out of his house. No father would willingly agree to give his son to such a woman. But when it comes to our life with God, believers say, "Lord, even if we behave in a friendly way towards the world, which is your enemy, we want to continue to be regarded as your own sweet virgin bride!" Oh, how believers deceive themselves. But God is not fooled, beloved. The Word of God says that God is looking



on to His precious Word. Beloved, if we be like queen Vashti and fail to hear and appreciate God's call, then our 'royal estate' shall be given unto another – even one who is better than we are.

THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE

“Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purification accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of women;)” (Esther 2:12).

This verse portrays the purifying of one who is to rule and reign along side the King. The bride is required to purify herself before she comes to the king. She has to prepare herself before she is clothed with the glory of God.

Many believers have an understanding that the Bridegroom will come 'any moment'. Hence, they do not pay much attention to getting ready for Him. However, it is necessary that the bride prepare herself thoroughly, beloved. It is through the process of 'purifying' that the bride of Christ will be prepared. She shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints (Revelations 19:8). She shall not come before the king without fulfilling the purifying periods.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting



“For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

The oil of myrrh, the Holy Spirit, shall mortify the deeds of our body and purify us of the flesh. He is the oil that shall soak us and enable us to put our flesh to death. This is the work of preparation that God’s Spirit is doing in His people, so that they may become a fitting and proper bride for His Son. And as many as are led by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the flesh—they and they alone shall qualify to be the Sons of God.

Beloved, this is the preparation God wants us to do in our lives. He wants us to die to the flesh, to die to our self and to die to the ‘deeds of the flesh’. God wants to soak us in the oil of myrrh. God’s people have been living to themselves for too long. They have only been meeting their self-interests. Even when the children of God are engaged and occupied in missionary work or evangelical work, the self has been glorifying itself before God. But the Bible says that no flesh shall glorify itself before God (1 *Corinthians* 1:29). Let us give ourselves to God’s purifying Spirit. Let us show God that we appreciate His calling upon our lives by submitting to His cleansing. “Whoever has this hope purifies himself” . (1 *John* 3:3).



our understanding, knowing the perfect will of God in our lives.

“By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15).

There is another sacrifice that is a sweet odour to God. The sacrifice of our praise and worship to the Lord will purify us and give us the strength to bear up with the purifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

God wants to purify the bride. In God’s calendar we are living in the sunset of the sixth day. Every day is as a thousand years. The psalmist says, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday” (*Psalms* 90:4). For the bride of Christ, the sixth month of purification is going to come to an end very shortly. God wants to purify us before the advent of the seventh day. He wants to raise up the ‘new man’ (the spiritual man) in His own likenesses and after His own image (*Genesis* 1:25) that He may rest on the seventh day.

Let us be serious about our calling at this time. We are called to offer our bodies as living sacrifices and to sacrifice our praise and worship unto the Lord, even though we may not be doing full time ministry. We have to offer ourselves to the purifying Spirit of God that we may be prepared as a bridal company. There is no place in our lives to make excuses. God requires and demands that all of the self be surrendered



transformed by the renewing of our minds. Only after our renewal will we be able to take a right decision according to the will of God. God is pleased only when His will is carried out.

Paul said that if any man uses wood, hay or straw, (that is, the things of the world and the choice of man) to build upon the foundations laid by Christ, then that building would fall and come to naught (1 *Corinthians* 3:12). The work and effort done by man can never have any lasting value because it would not please the King. The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian church to take heed how they build for they can either build their house with man's resources or they could build their house with foundation stones provided by God. There is a choice that needs to be exercised in the things we do. We are to choose to do that which would please God.

Some people think that since the Son of Man has set them free, they are free to do whatever they like! They argue that at one time they were undoubtedly under the law, but now they have been set free from bondage, and hence they are free as birds to do exactly as they wish. Beloved, such as they, deceive themselves. They live under a misconception. Our Savior has freed us from the bondage of sin that we may become servants of God (*Romans* 6:22). We have been delivered from the law that we may serve the Lord in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (*Romans* 7:6).

Beloved, we are to exercise our freedom, liberty and free

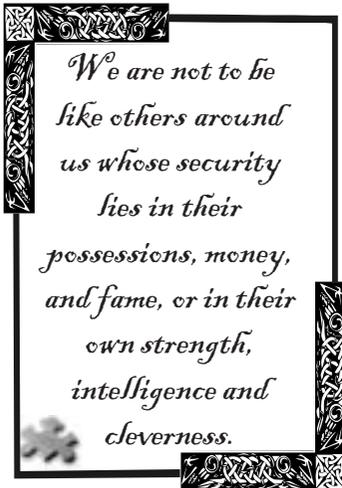


When we tell them what the Word of God says, they may scoff at us and give us their own interpretations. But we need to step away from human reasoning, from vain justifications and from the advice of well-meaning relatives and friends. Let the Holy Spirit minister to us. Beware of popular statements that sound convincing. Let people not psyche us into taking an easy course. Rather, let us please the King, beloved. Let God be true and every man a liar. The righteous will not beg, but they will eat in peace.

THE PECULIAR CALLING OF THE ESTHER COMPANY

Not only are we a peculiar people, but we also have a peculiar calling in the eyes of the world for we are called to

please the King. Let us appreciate our high calling unto God and not be like Vashti who lost her calling.



*We are not to be
like others around
us whose security
lies in their
possessions, money,
and fame, or in their
own strength,
intelligence and
cleverness.*

“And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight

you, take no thought for your own life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." (*Matthew 6:25*).

The Lord shall provide bread of life to those who hunger for His Kingdom. Who among us has seen the seed of the righteous beg? In the eyes of the world, this is foolishness. That is why the Lord says that 'ye are a peculiar people'. We are not to be like others around us whose security lies in their possessions, money, and fame, or in their own strength, intelligence and cleverness.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
(*Revelation 22:17*).

Let us purify ourselves in this hour and choose to do what is pleasing to the King. The sixth day is coming to an end, and the seventh day is fast approaching, when the bride shall sit down with the Bridegroom in all her beauty and glory.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying.

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