

Audio Transcript of Sermon  
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Religious Nuts or a Peculiar People?

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Peter writes that we are a peculiar people when he also writes that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation who have obtained mercy from God. Let's read what Peter wrote in first Peter two verse nine.

**1 Peter 2:9-10**

**9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:**

**10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.**

Being a chosen generation sounds wonderful. Being called a royal priesthood is flattering. Being part of a holy nation sounds incredible. But then next to all of that is the tag of peculiar. It seems out of place compared to the rest. Did God call us to be religious nuts or strange, or is something else meant by Peter's words?

Peculiar comes from two Greek words, Strong's Greek word 1519, *eis*, meaning exceedingly, and *peripoiesis*, Strong's Greek word 4047, meaning peculiar. First Peter two verse nine is the only instance of the Greek being translated as peculiar. Backward, against, despised, snare, and stumbling block, are just some of dozens of English words translated for the Greek, and all have this impression of being not quite right.

We are that chosen generation, that royal priesthood, and a holy nation, while also being called a peculiar people so that through what we do the glory of God should be easy for others to see, not because there is anything special with us, other than the Holy Spirit, but in spite of all of our limitations, that which is good within God can be seen. God is not showcasing hypocrisy within us, but a miracle of God that takes a person who is well below God, so far below God that we are like a speck of dirt.

Having been called and introduced to the Kingdom of God and knowing that we are to seek first The Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, there are some who choose to be that chosen generation, the royal priesthood, and the holy nation while rejecting being a peculiar people. Many think of these people as hypocrites.

Anybody can be a hypocrite, even a person who is a man after God's own heart. David was such a hypocrite when it came to his sin with Bathsheba that led to the slaughter of her husband in the heat of battle, that when Nathan came to relay the message of God to him, David couldn't comprehend that the message was all about him. He thought whosoever acted the way Nathan described was worthy of death. Imagine his surprise when he found out he had just pronounced his own death sentence. To David's credit, he quickly repented, but the punishment for hypocrisy would be severe, the child between Bathsheba and him would die. Second Samuel twelve verse one.

## **2 Samuel 12:1-12**

- 1. And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.**
- 2. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:**
- 3. But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.**
- 4. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.**
- 5. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:**
- 6. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.**
- 7. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;**

**8. And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.**

**9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.**

**10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.**

**11. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.**

**12. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.**

John writes of a type of hypocrisy we must avoid. We cannot love God while hating our brother. First John four verse seventeen.

#### **1 John 4:17-21**

**17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.**

**18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**

**19. We love him, because he first loved us.**

**20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?**

**21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.**

We've all read verses like what we just read in John and immediately because of guilt begin to rationalize. In our minds we conclude that we don't hate a person, we just really dislike a person, or disapprove of what they do. When we rationalize, we have to be careful not to rationalize our way into something else we are told to avoid. For instance when we disapprove of something another person is doing, that is judging, and Jesus told us not to judge lest we be judged. Even when a person is doing something the Bible says they shouldn't be doing, it

is not our place to judge them, lest we be judged. Sharing information from the Bible about what a person should do is not the same as judging. For instance, telling a person that the Bible says a person isn't to work on the Sabbath is different than telling a person they are breaking the fourth commandment. One provides information and the other judges.

Jesus told the disciples that we will be judged similar to how we judge others, because when we focus our attention on what other people are doing, we often at the same time are giving ourselves a free pass. Instead of judging others we should be looking at what we can improve in our life. Matthew seven verse one.

### **Matthew 7:1-5**

- 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged.**
- 2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.**
- 3. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?**
- 4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?**
- 5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.**

James writes that if we think we are religious, that will be coupled by controlling what we say, and purposely choosing what we do knowing that it is what we do that defines our faith, not what we believe. James one verse twenty-six.

### **James 1:26-27**

- 26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.**
- 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.**

Jesus wrote that when we do good in society and help others, that needs to be done quietly not seeking attention. If in doing good we are also running around telling people, "Look what I did," people may be impressed, but God will not be impressed. When we pray, prayer is to be done privately, not publicly so that

others can see our incredible prayer, and when it comes to incredible prayers, what is most incredible is that God already knows what we need before we come before him. We are told not to have long prayers that go on and on and on repeating points previously made in an attempt to curry favor with God. We are told to be direct in prayer, praising God, asking for the Kingdom of God to be established, asking for God's will to be done, asking for our needs to be met, asking for forgiveness of sins as we forgive others, and asking for deliverance from evil. That outline is not lengthy, and a lengthy repetitive prayer will not impress God.

Jesus immediately concluded the model prayer with this thought, that if we forgive others of wrongs they have done against us, God will forgive us of our sin, while warning of the consequence for failing to forgive. Matthew six verse one.

#### **Matthew 6:1-15**

- 1. Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.**
- 2. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**
- 3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:**
- 4. That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.**
- 5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**
- 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.**
- 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.**
- 8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.**
- 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.**
- 10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**

- 11. Give us this day our daily bread.**
- 12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**
- 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**
- 14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**
- 15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

In writing to the Romans, Paul writes that it is inexcusable to judge others for their sin, because we all sin. As we judge others for their sin we condemn ourselves. Maybe we are judging a person for a sin they do and we do not do. With God, having any sin is having sin, the exact type of sin is not an issue. When we judge others for their sins, we invite God to judge us for our sins. As we judge others for their sins, we are also forgetting that it is God's mercy that leads us all to repentance, and it is God who will show no respect of person. If we are given mercy, others can be given mercy, and as we expect God to condemn others, God will be sure to put His chosen generation, His royal priesthood, the holy nation in front of the line. Romans two verse one.

### **Romans 2:1-11**

- 1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.**
- 2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.**
- 3. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?**
- 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**
- 5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;**
- 6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds:**
- 7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:**

- 8. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,**
- 9. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;**
- 10. But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:**
- 11. For there is no respect of persons with God.**

Jesus taught to avoid the hypocrisy of those who see themselves as righteous, like the Pharisees, who while having a thorough knowledge of the scriptures never considered themselves to be hypocrites, even though what they taught and what they practiced were different. Luke twelve verse one.

### **Luke 12:1-3**

- 1. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**
- 2. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.**
- 3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.**

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes of people who in the last days will love pleasure more than loving God, who will have a form of godliness but deny its power. The power of God leads people to repentance so that they can have eternal life, and somehow in the last days that messaging is replaced with a message of judging others, because it is when we judge others, we deny the power of God as through our judging we deny ourselves eternal life. Second Timothy three verse one.

### **2 Timothy 3:1-9**

- 1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**
- 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,**

- 3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,**
- 4. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**
- 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**
- 6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,**
- 7. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**
- 8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.**
- 9. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.**

To Titus, Paul wrote that there would be legalistic focused people who would profess faith, and yet their profession of faith would be denied by their very actions, showing that cynics, those who see the bad in everything are different than those who first see the good. Titus one verse ten.

#### **Titus 1:10-16**

- 10. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:**
- 11. Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.**
- 12. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.**
- 13. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;**
- 14. Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.**
- 15. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.**
- 16. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.**

Jesus taught the disciples to look not at the words of a person, but to look at the results of what they do, explaining that a good tree brings forth good fruit and an



evil tree brings forth evil fruit. There can be no hypocrisy, no variation of shadow between what we believe and what we do. Matthew seven verse fifteen.

#### **Matthew 7:15-20**

**15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.**

**16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?**

**17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.**

**18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.**

**19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.**

**20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**

We cannot be a hypocrite by ignoring the will of God. Broadly speaking, the will of God is that all people come to repentance and be saved, so what we do has to be working towards that end. We cannot be developing a list of the righteous who will be saved and a list of evil people who we would expect God to toss into the lake of fire. In all things, we have to be doing the will of God. Matthew seven verse twenty-one.

#### **Matthew 7:21-23**

**21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**

**22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?**

**23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

Isaiah wrote of a people that drew near to God with their lips and whose heart was far removed. It is when a society is grossly hypocritical that God causes wisdom and understanding to leave that society. Isaiah twenty-nine verse thirteen.

### **Isaiah 29:13-14**

**13. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:**

**14. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.**

Jesus quoted the passage we just read from Isaiah when responding to a question He received from the Pharisees and scribes who wanted to know why the disciples didn't follow ceremonial handwashing procedures. Jesus showed that they focused on men's teaching of the scriptures instead of what was in the scriptures adding that in so doing they rejected the commandment of God so that they could adhere to these teachings of man. Mark seven verse five.

### **Mark 7:5-13**

**5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?**

**6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.**

**7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

**8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.**

**9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**

**10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:**

**11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.**

**12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;**

**13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.**

Jeremiah wrote that those who trust in man are cursed as trusting in man and not God as this leads people from God. Jeremiah also wrote that those who trust in

God are blessed, because while the heart of man is deceitful, the heart of God is not. Jeremiah seventeen verse five.

#### **Jeremiah 17:5-10**

**5. Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.**

**6. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.**

**7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**

**8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**

**9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**

**10. I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.**

Paul told the Romans to mark people who cause divisions and offences contrary to what is taught in the Bible and avoid them. Romans sixteen verse seventeen.

#### **Romans 16:17-18**

**17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**

**18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.**

The Greek for offences is *skandalon*, Strong's Greek word 4625, from which we get the English word scandal. The word translated as divisions is *dichostsis*, Strong's Greek word 1370, meaning sedition. We have to avoid people who want us to defect from the truth of the Bible.

David contrasted the enduring goodness of God to the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of mankind, showing that those who follow deceit will be destroyed, and those who trust in God, who rely on God's mercy will be like a plant that is well-watered. Psalm fifty-two verse one.

### **Psalm 52:1-9**

- 1. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.**
- 2. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.**
- 3. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.**
- 4. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.**
- 5. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.**
- 6. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:**
- 7. Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.**
- 8. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.**
- 9. I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.**

Proverbs tells us to avoid having confidence in people, especially unfaithful people because like a broken tooth or strained ankle, having confidence in a person who is unfaithful will hurt at the worst possible time. Proverbs twenty-five verse nineteen.

### **Proverbs 25:19**

**19. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.**

In Jeremiah we are told that we cannot claim a religious link to God and expect favors from God. In Jeremiah's time people would claim a connection to the temple to justify what they wanted to do. Likewise today, we cannot claim a connection to the church to justify what we want to do. We cannot allow the faith to become a den of robbers, much like the moneychangers who were tossed out of the temple by Jesus. The faith focuses on what we are taught without deviation and delivers on the concept that we act without oppressing others, like widows, orphans, and foreigners. Jeremiah seven verse one.

### **Jeremiah 7:1-11**

- 1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,**
- 2. Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.**
- 3. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.**
- 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.**
- 5. For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;**
- 6. If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:**
- 7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.**
- 8. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.**
- 9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;**
- 10. And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?**
- 11. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.**

If we allow hypocrisy to enter the faith, we become profane in the eyes of God and God promises to bring evil upon us. Jeremiah twenty-three verse eleven.

### **Jeremiah 23:11-12**

- 11. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.**
- 12. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.**

We need to be mindful that there will be people who may hear the word of God and who may enjoy listening to the message. For them the message may be inspiring and uplifting, and it does not lead them to take any action. They are simply inspired and they feel good, but they take no action. These people will not

grow in the faith, but at some future time may realize that they had heard a message from God. Ezekiel thirty-three verse thirty.

### **Ezekiel 33:30-33**

**30. Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.**

**31. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.**

**32. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.**

**33. And when this cometh to pass, lo, it will come, then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.**

We are called to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people who have obtained mercy from God. The incredible gift of mercy that leads us to eternal life is given to us in spite of who we are not because of who we are. Again and again we are warned of hypocrisy, where somehow we judge others for their sins while giving ourselves a free pass on our very own sins.

Jesus tells us to be focused on ourselves when it comes to sin to evaluate what sins we need to remove from our own lives. It is when we judge others that we are most in danger of being judged by God for what we have judged others. With God sin is the transgression of the law and it makes no difference what part of the law has been transgressed, when we judge others we condemn ourselves to be guilty of sin.

While we are called to be a peculiar people, we are not called to be strange. There is nothing about our faith that requires us to act weirdly. Instead as a peculiar people, we are reminded that we are our own stumbling block, and it is through the death and resurrection of Jesus and an incredible act of mercy that we have access to eternal life.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.