



The Great Themes of Scripture

5. The People of God. A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation

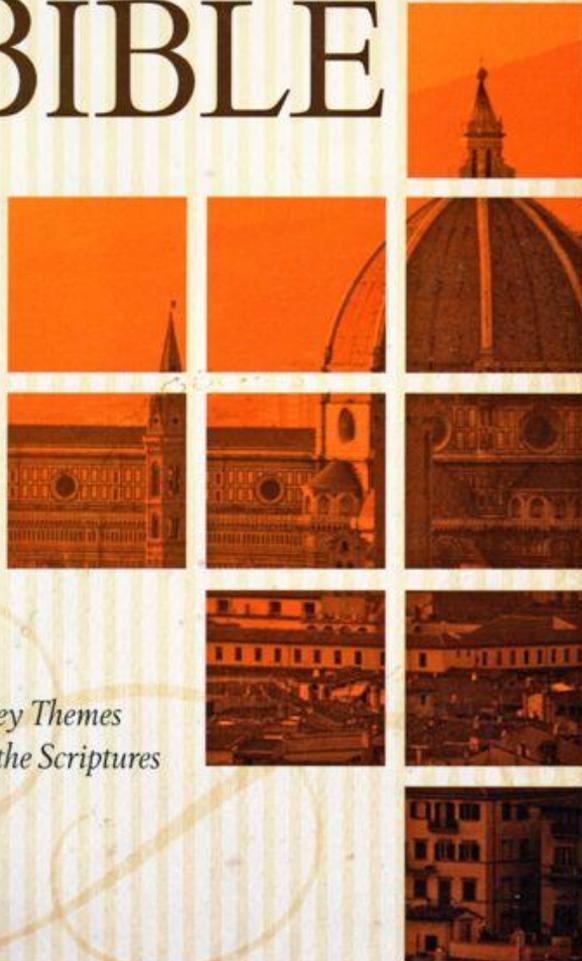
Sunday, October 31, 2010

10 to 10:50 am, in the Parlor

Presenter: David Monyak

St. John in the Wilderness

MAKING SENSE
of the BIBLE



*A Study of 10 Key Themes
Traced Through the Scriptures*

H. H. Drake Williams III

Primary Reference

n **Making Sense of the Bible. A Study of 10 Key Themes Traced Through the Scriptures.** H.H. Drake Williams III, 2006. Chapter 9. “The People of God. A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation”

W. EUGENE MARCH



VOLUME 1
Great Themes
of the Bible

Secondary Reference

n **Great Themes of
the Bible, Volume 1,**
W. Eugene March,
2007. Chapter 10
“People of God”

Great Themes of Scripture

- n **October 3:** Covenant. God's Promises are Forever
- n **October 10:** The Messiah. Unto Us a Child is Born
- n **October 17:** Law. Regulating the Good Life
- n **October 24:** Salvation. Amazing Grace!
- n **October 31:** The People of God. A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation

Almighty God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself: We praise and bless you for those whom you have sent in the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel to all nations. We thank you that in all parts of the earth a community of love has been gathered together by their prayers and labors, and that in every place your servants call upon your Name; for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours for ever.

This Week:

**5: The People of God. A
Kingdom of Priests and a
Holy Nation**

The People of God, The Church

Just as God's will is creation and is called "the world," so his intention is the salvation of men, and it is called "the Church."

—Clement of Alexandria

Let him who wants a true church cling to the word by which everything is upheld.

—Martin Luther

Introduction



Introduction

God Seeking a People

- n The idea that Israel or the church is **“the people of God”** is common among people of Jewish and Christian faith.
 - n there are frequent references in the Bible to peoples, both communities and individuals, as **“God’s people.”**
- n The Bible tells us that God has been seeking a people to follow him from the earliest times.

Introduction

God Seeking a People

- n It is God who establishes and maintains the relationship with the humans beings making up God's People.
 - n It is always divine love that initiates, defines and shapes the relationship
- n *In other words:* our concern today is:
 - n The identity of the “people who belong to God,”
- n and not:
 - n The “people who think God belongs to them.”

A classical painting depicting Moses, an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a blue robe and a red sash. He is shown from the chest up, holding a large, rectangular stone tablet inscribed with Hebrew text. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky. The text on the tablet is clearly legible and includes the opening words of the Ten Commandments: 'אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ', 'לֹא תִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים', 'לֹא תִעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל', 'לֹא תִשָּׂא שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶינוּ בְּטוֹעַם', 'יְזַכְּרֵנוּ לַעֲשֵׂת בְּיָמֵינוּ', 'לֹא תִשָּׂא שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶינוּ בְּטוֹעַם', 'לֹא תִשָּׂא שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶינוּ בְּטוֹעַם'.

Biblical Language for the People of God

Biblical Language

Peoples and Nations

- n Some fourteen Hebrew and Greek terms are translated “people” in the Bible.
 - n They refer to different categories of people: crowds, inhabitants of a place, individuals, assemblies of people.
- n Only a few of these terms are used to specifically refer to God’s people in a special way.

Biblical Language

Goy, Goyim

- n Hebrew *goy* (plural *goyim*)
 - n Often translated “nation”; tends to designate territory.
 - n Occasionally used to refer to the nation of Israel.
 - n More often, used to refer to non-Hebrews.
 - n In some biblical contexts, *goy* has a negative nuance, because it is used to refer to idolatrous or hostile peoples and nations.

Biblical Language

'Am

- n Hebrew *'am*
 - n emphasized kinship, family, clan
 - n used of humankind as a whole, or of particular communities
- n *'Am* is used when Israel is singled out as God's elected, chosen people:
 - n **"the Lord's people"** (Numbers 11:29; 1 Samuel 2:24),
 - n **"my [God's] people"** (Exodus 3:7, Exodus 5:1),
 - n **"holy people"** (Deuteronomy 7:6; Isaiah 62:12 and 63:18),
 - n **"a treasured possession"** (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2 and 26:18).

Biblical Language

laos

- n In the New Testament Greek, one particular term, *laos* (people), was used predominantly in reference to Israel. In particular:
 - n Israel as God's special people
 - n The people among whom Jesus lived and worked

A painting of Moses, an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a blue tunic and a red shawl. He is holding two large, rectangular tablets of stone, one in each hand. The tablets are inscribed with Hebrew text. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky. The text "God's People in the Old Testament" is overlaid in large, bold, cyan letters.

God's People in the Old Testament

A Special People



A Special People

Abraham, Chosen By God

- n From a very early time in the Old Testament, God began gathering a people to himself and treating them as special:
 - n **Genesis 12:1-3: The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (NIV)**

A Special People

Abraham, Chosen By God

- n God has singled out Abraham and his family as a people for God.
- n God gives Abraham special blessings (land, seed, blessing).
- n God promises Abraham will become a great nation, blessing all the peoples of the earth.
- n In Genesis 17, God reaffirms to Abraham and Sarah that he has chosen them to become a special people and nation.
 - n The people descending from Abraham will be not only Abraham's people. They will be special, a people belonging to God.
 - n They are to be devoted to God and keep his covenant

A Special People

Abraham, Chosen By God

- n God changes the name of Abram to Abraham, of Sarai to Sarah.
 - n Changing a name in ancient Near East society indicated a change in a person's character, destiny, reputation, or fame.
 - n The change would have been a highly significant event for them, a sign of a change in their destiny.

A Special People

Abraham's Descendants, Chosen By God

- n Throughout the Old Testament, God is repeatedly kind to the people of Abraham because they are special to him.
 - n God appears to Abraham's descendants Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, promising to bless them—despite the difficulties they face, often due to their own wrongdoing
- n In Exodus, God promises to rescue Abraham's descendants from the rule of Pharaoh, for God is committed to God's people.

A Special People

Abraham's Descendants, Chosen By God

- n In Deuteronomy, God promises to lead his people into the Promised Land because of the promises previously made to Abraham.
- n In Deuteronomy 7:6-8, Moses describes the uniqueness of the people of Israel:
 - n **For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (NIV)**

A Special People

Abraham's Descendants, Chosen By God

- n In 1 Kings, Elijah, in order to triumph over the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, claims the special status of God's people.
- n In Judges 20:2 and 2 Samuel 14:13, the people of Israel are called the "people of God"
- n In Isaiah 43:20, the prophet Isaiah declares that God looks after his chosen people in the desert (Isaiah 43:20) and will give this special people an inheritance (Isaiah 63:9; Isaiah 65:22).

A Special People

God Gathers a People for Himself

- n The promise that God will gather a people to himself so that they will proclaim him as their God can be found throughout the Old Testament:
 - n Jeremiah 31:33: **“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God.”** (NIV)
 - n Jeremiah 24:7, 31:1 and 32:38
 - n Ezekiel 11:20, 14:11, 34:30 and 37:23,27
 - n Hosea 2:23
 - n Zechariah 8:8, and 13:9

A classical painting depicting Moses, an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a dark blue robe and a red cloak. He is shown from the chest up, looking down at a large, rectangular stone tablet he holds in his left hand. The tablet is inscribed with Hebrew text, representing the Ten Commandments. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky. The overall style is characteristic of 17th-century Baroque or Neoclassical art.

A Worshipping People

A Worshipping People

A People to Worship the LORD

- n God's people are not simply called to be a social organization, or family group.
- n God called a people **to worship him**.
- n The patriarchs of the nation of Israel — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — worshipped the Lord (Genesis 22:5 and 47:31)

A Worshipping People

Let My People Go to Worship Me

- n **Worship** was the original reason Moses appealed to Pharaoh for the release of God's people:
 - n Exodus 7:16: [God demanding of Pharaoh through Moses] "Let my people go, so that **they may worship me in the desert**" (NIV)
- n Moses repeated this reason numerous times before Pharaoh
- n When Pharaoh finally ordered Moses and the people to leave Egypt, he told them to go and worship the LORD:).
 - n Exodus 12:31: ³¹ During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! **Go, worship the LORD** as you have requested." (NIV)

A Worshipping People

Commands to Worship the LORD

- n There are numerous commands and exhortations to worship the LORD.
- n God directly commands that his people worship him (Exodus 23:25).
- n Worship of the LORD is implicitly assumed in the many passages in which God prohibits his people from the worship of false gods.
- n Many times in the Psalms — the hymnbook for the nation of Israel — the people are exhorted to worship:
 - n *Example:* Psalm 95:6: “**Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.**” (NIV)

A Worshipping People

Worship as a Defining Characteristic

- n In the book of Jonah, Jonah is on board a ship bound for Joppa with people of many other nationalities.
- n When Jonah is blamed for the violent storm that threatens the boat, Jonah describes himself as: **“I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”** (Jonah 1:9, NIV)

A Worshipping People

A Tribe to Lead the Nation in Worship

- n Worship was so important that God set aside one of the 9 tribes of Israel, the descendants of Levi, to lead the nation in worship. They:
 - n offered sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-15, 4:10, 5:8-10, 14:9, 15:15, 15:30, 17:5, Deuteronomy 18:3);
 - n practiced divination with the Urim and Thummim;
 - n instructed God's people through the Torah (Leviticus 10:10, Deuteronomy 24:8, 33:10; 2 Chronicles 15:3; Ezra 7:21; Jeremiah 18:18, Ezekiel 7:26);
 - n tended to the house of worship (1 Samuel 7:1; 1 Kings 8:6-11, 2 Kings 12:4-10, 1 Chronicles 28:21; 2 Chronicles 23:6).

A Worshipping People

A Great Building for Worship

- n The most significant building in the land of Israel, the **temple** built by King Solomon, was devoted to worship.
- n It was decorated extravagantly with stone, gold, and the finest woods.
- n It was the place where God's presence dwelled (cf. 1 Kings 8:1-11).
- n Annual pilgrimages to the temple were highly important occasions, imbued with spiritual value and joy for God's people (Isaiah 30:29; 35:10; Psalms 42:1-4, 43:3-4; 84:1-2; 122:1-9; 137:6)

A Worshipping People

Special Times for Worship

- n Special times were set aside for worship of the LORD
- n Most notably, the **Sabbath day**, when all of Israel lay aside their work and devoted themselves wholly to the Lord:
 - n Exodus 20:8-11: ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a **Sabbath to the LORD your God**. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (NIV)

A Worshipping People

Special Times for Worship

n Other special days included:

n **Day of Atonement**

n Annual event devoted to the cleansing of sin from the community

n **Festival of the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread**

n Week-long commemorations of the Exodus

n **Feasts of First Fruits, Trumpets, and Tabernacles**

n Feasts of thanksgiving to God

A painting of Moses, an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a blue robe and a red cloak. He is holding a large, rectangular stone tablet with Hebrew text. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky. The text "A Blessing to Others" is overlaid in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

A Blessing to Others

A Blessing to Others

Blessing To All the Peoples of the Earth

- n The people God called to be his own will be a blessing to others.
- n Can be seen from as early as Genesis 12:2-3, in God's promised to Abraham:
 - n ² "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and **you will be a blessing.**
 - n ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**" (NIV)
- n Repeated in later portions of Genesis (18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

A Blessing to Others

Blessing Through the Life of Joseph

- n Promise to bless the world through Abraham's lineage is realized in the life of Joseph, Abraham's great grandson:
 - n Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt because of his brothers' envy.
 - n In Egypt, God used Joseph as an advisor to Pharaoh to prepare for a coming famine, saving the lives of his brother's families, the nation of Egypt and many people from surrounding nations (Genesis 41:38-57).

A Blessing to Others

A House of Prayer for All Nations

- n In his dedication of the temple King Solomon prays it would also become a place where **all nations** would come and worship God (1 Kings 8:41-43).
- n Isaiah also speaks of the temple as a place to which **all nations** could come: a “**house of prayer for all nations**” (Isaiah 56:7).

A Blessing to Others

Salvation Among All Nations

- n The people of God pray that the whole world might become God's people:
 - n Psalm 67: **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him (NIV)**

A Blessing to Others

A Light to the Nations

- n The People of God look forward to the time when Israel's temple will be a beacon to all nations:
 - n **Isaiah 2:2-3: In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (NIV)**

A Blessing to Others

A Light to the Nations

- n Later, the servant figure in Isaiah is prophesized to be a **“light for the Gentiles”**:
 - n Isaiah 42:6-7: I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a **light for the Gentiles**, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. (NIV)
 - n Isaiah 49:6: It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a **light for the Gentiles**, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. (NIV)

A classical painting depicting Moses, an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a dark blue robe and a red sash. He is shown from the chest up, holding a large, rectangular stone tablet inscribed with Hebrew text. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky. The text "Images of God's People" is overlaid in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Images of God's People

Images of God's People

God is the Husband to Israel, His Bride

- n The Old Testament portrays God's relationship with his people through a variety of colorful images.
- n God is like the husband to Israel, his bride (Jeremiah 2:2, Ezekiel 16:8-14, Hosea 2:1—3:1, Isaiah 54:4-6):
 - n A holy bride, devoted to her husband (Jeremiah)
 - n A wayward wife playing the harlot (Ezekiel, Hosea)
 - n A wife with a loving, nurturing, protecting husband — God (Isaiah).

Images of God's People

God's People are His Children

- n God's people as his children (Deuteronomy 14:1; Exodus 4:22, Isaiah 1:4; 45:11, Psalms 22:22, 122:8, 133:1).
 - n God's people are brothers (Psalms)
 - n Israel is the first born "son" (Exodus)

Images of God's People

God as the Great Shepherd

- n God's people as sheep and the Lord as the great shepherd:
 - n Psalm 95:7: **"He is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care."** (NIV)
 - n Psalm 100:3: **"Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture."** (NIV)
 - n Sheep oftentimes go their own way (Isaiah 53:6). They can wander so far they do not remember where their home is (Jeremiah 50:6).
 - n Psalm 23: God leads his sheep to green pastures and still waters, and is present even in the shadow of death.
 - n Ezekiel 34, Zechariah 11: God will rescue his people from inattentive shepherds and take care of them
 - n Numbers 26:16-17; Jeremiah 3:15: God will also provide good human shepherds to look after his people.

Images of God's People

Israel as the Vineyard

- n The People of God are like a vineyard, tended by God:
 - n Psalm 80:8-18 compares Israel to a vine planted by God, describing Israel's history in relation to what happened to the vine.
 - n Isaiah 5:1-7: Israel is a vineyard that has had many difficulties.
 - n Isaiah 27:2-6: Israel is a fruitful vineyard the Lord watches over.
- n God is pictured as the one who plants, looks after, and cares for his people, the vineyard.

Images of God's People

God's People as a Remnant

- n The books of the Prophets develop an image of God's people as a **remnant**. (particularly developed in Isaiah 40-66):
 - n Remnant: a leftover group of faithful Israelites who remain loyal to God despite the waywardness of the rest of the nation.
 - n The future of Israel is bound up with this group, “a holy seed,” or spiritual kernel, which should survive impending judgment and become the kernel of God's people, blessed of God, and a blessing to others



The New Testament and God's People



A Special People

A Special People

God Choses His Own

- n Like Israel in the Old Testament, the New Testament describes the Church as a people special to God.
- n Jesus chose his disciples to be his own:
 - n Chose Simon and Andrew while they were mending their fishing nets, saying they would become “fishers of men.” (Mark 1:14-19)
 - n Chose Matthew the tax collector while he was counting money (Matthew 9:9)
 - n Chose other disciples after spending a night in prayer (Luke 6:12-16)
- n He later told his disciples:
 - n John 15:16, “You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit— fruit that will last.**” (NIV)

A Special People

God Sent His Own To Call the Gentiles

- n Later in the New Testament, God chose to send his disciples among the Gentiles:
 - n God selected Saul of Tarsus (later Paul) to be his apostle to the Gentiles, declaring him to be his “chosen instrument” for the task (Acts 9:15)
 - n Acts 9:13-15 ¹³ “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man [Saul of Tarsus] and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.” ¹⁵But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is **my chosen instrument** to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.” (NIV)

A Special People

God Sent His Own To Call the Gentiles

- n Later in the New Testament, God chose to send his disciples among the Gentiles:
 - n Through a dream, God sent Peter to reach out to Cornelius, a Gentile centurion (Acts 10:1—11:18)
 - n God sent the apostle Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch, another Gentile (Acts 8:26-40)
- n In Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council of the church decides that God is calling Gentiles to himself.

A Special People

God Choses His Own

- n In one of his letters, Peter describes Christians as God's chosen:
 - n 1 Peter 2:9-10: **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**
(NIV)

A Special People

God Choses His Own

- n Paul in his letters also declares God selects people to be his own:
 - n Romans 8:28-29
 - n Ephesians 1:3-10
 - n 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5
 - n Titus 2:14

A Special People

God Choses His Own

n *Example:* Ephesians 1:3-6:

n ³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For **he chose us** in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us **to be adopted as his sons** through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (NIV)

A Special People

The Wild Olive Shoot

- n In Romans 11:17, Paul tells Gentile Christians: they are a **“wild olive shoot, ... grafted in among the others”** to an olive tree symbolizing the nation of Israel. They **“now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root”**
- n The “wild Gentile shoot” thus became associated with God’s Special People of the Old Testament, with the heroes of the faith such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Gideon, David, and Daniel.



A Worshipping People

A Worshipping People

Worshipping God in the Person of Jesus

- n As God's people were drawn together to worship him in Old Testament times, so too in the New Testament are they drawn together to worship him in the person of Jesus Christ.
- n From the earliest chapters of the Gospels, God's people are people who worship Him:
 - n When Mary is told that she would bear the Messiah she breaks into worship (Luke 2:46-55)
 - n When the angels announce Jesus' birth, they burst forth into songs of worship (Luke 2:14), leading the shepherds to worship (Luke 2:20).
 - n The wise men come from the east to seek Jesus so that they might worship him (Matt. 2:2).
 - n When Jesus is first presented at the temple, the righteous and devout Simeon lifts his arms in praise to God (Luke 2:25).

A Worshipping People

Worshipping God in the Person of Jesus

- n The first appearances of Jesus following his resurrection elicit worship:
 - n The women who saw Jesus immediately after his resurrection worship him (Matthew 28:9),
 - n When the disciples see him, they worship him (Matthew 28:17, and Luke 24:52).
 - n Thomas overcomes his initial doubts and worships Jesus (John 20:24-31).

A Worshipping People

An Early Church Grounded in Worship

- n As the church takes root in the book of Acts, their gatherings were grounded in worship:
 - n Acts 2:42-47 ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**.
⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the **temple** courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷**praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people. (NIV)

A Worshipping People

An Early Church Grounded in Worship

- n The Letters in the New Testament often begin with declarations of worship and praise:
 - n Ephesians: begins with a chapter praising God.
 - n 1 Peter: begins with a chapter ascribing praise to God.
 - n Romans, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians: begin with thanksgivings to God for His work among His people.
 - n Hebrews: begins by ascribing worship to Jesus, who is far above the angels.

A Worshipping People

Christians: Those Who Worship

- n Paul identifies Christians as a people that worships by the Spirit of God:
 - n Philippians 3:3: **For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh. (NIV)**
- n Peter defines Christians as royal priesthood declaring the praises of God:
 - n 1 Peter 2:9: **“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (NIV)**

A Worshipping People

Christians: Those Who Worship

- n In Revelation, God's people are gathered around the throne of God, worshipping Jesus with this song:
 - n Revelation 5:9-10: **"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth"** (NIV).



A Blessing to Others

A Blessing to Others

The Light of World

- n Immediately after Jesus calls the disciples, he sends them to bless others (Matt. 10:1-42).
- n In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus tells his followers:
 - n You are the **light of the world**. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before men**, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (NIV)

A Blessing to Others

Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

n In his final words to the disciples before his ascension, Jesus tells them they will be witnesses to him to the ends of earth – and hence a blessing to all the nations:

n Acts 1:8: **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (NIV)**

A Blessing to Others

Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

- n After Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit comes upon them:
 - n Peter and John insist that they are unable to stop teaching about Jesus to all who will listen (Acts chapters 3-4)
 - n The disciples spread the good news in Samaria (Acts chapter 8), a region they would have avoided at all costs in years past
 - n Peter reaches out to the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts Chapter 10)
 - n Paul, after his conversion, begins his missionary journeys bringing the Good News throughout the Roman Empire.

A Blessing to Others

Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

- n In the book of Revelation, we learn the result of the gospel message being spread to the ends of the earth world will be that God's people from every nation, tribe, people, and language will gather around the throne to worship him: (Revelation 5:9 and 7:9)

A Blessing to Others

A People from Every Tribe and Nation

n Revelation 7:9-12: ⁹After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, tribe, people and language**, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying:

“Amen!

Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.

Amen!” (NIV)



Images of God's People

Images of God's People

The Family of God

- n Many of the images associated with the people of God in the Old Testament are carried forward into the New Testament.
- n God's people are like a **family**:
 - n The church in the New Testament is called the family or household of God (1 Peter 4:17)
 - n Jesus says his family is whoever does the will of God:
 - n Mark 3:34-35: **“Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother”** (NIV).
 - n In Matthew 23:8, Jesus speaks of the disciples as brothers.

Images of God's People

The Family of God

- n Paul, Peter, James, John, and the writer of Hebrews also write of God's people as a **family**:
 - n their hearers are “brothers”
 - n the church is a family
- n Example: Galatians 6:10: “**Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers**” (NIV).

Images of God's People

A Flock Led By The Good Shepherd

- n The image of God's people as **sheep** is carried forward into the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John:
 - n In John 10, Jesus identifies himself as the good shepherd of God's people, the shepherd who leads his sheep and knows them by name. He will lay down his life for the sheep and protect them.

Images of God's People

Branches of the True Vine

- n The **agriculture imagery** for God's people is also carried forward into the New Testament:
 - n In John 15, Jesus refers to himself as the true vine and his people as the branches.
 - n In 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, Paul describes God's people as like a planting of the Lord.

Images of God's People

A Remnant Chosen by Grace

- n The image of God's people as a **remnant** also appears in the New Testament:
 - n Paul alludes to the remnant imagery in Romans 9:6: **“For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel,”** (NIV)
 - n In Romans 9:27 Paul, quoting Isaiah, declares that only a remnant of Israel will be saved.
 - n In Romans 11:5, Paul says **“at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.”** (NIV)



Summary

Summary

- n God has been seeking a people to follow him from the earliest times.
- n It is God's love that initiates, defines and shapes the relationship with the humans beings making up God's people.
- n The People of God are:
 - n a special people chosen by God
 - n a people who worship God
 - n a people who are a blessing to Others

Summary

- n Scriptural images describing the relationship between God and His People include:
 - n Family. God's People are brothers and sisters to each other, adopted children of God
 - n A Shepherd and His Flock. God is a shepherd who leads his sheep and knows them by name. He will lay down his life for his sheep.
 - n A Vineyard tended by God
 - n A Vine (God) with many branches (God's People)

Future Themes

A religious painting depicting the Pentecost event. The Holy Spirit is shown as a dove in the upper right, with tongues of fire appearing over a group of people. The scene is set in a dark, wooded area with a large group of people, some kneeling and some standing, looking towards the center. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the figures against the dark background.

- n **Creation.** A Whole New World
- n **Idolatry:** No Gods but God
- n **Kingdom:** Jesus Rules over All
- n **Holy Spirit:** The Comforter Has Come!
- n **Prophecy and Fulfillment:** Making Good on Promises