

*“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” NIV*

By contrast, worldly organizations make every effort to categorize members and assess their value to the organization. These organizations attempt to measure the effectiveness of individuals in the organization and manage them to their desired result. Worldly organizations rely on members seeking the acceptance of those in authority of that organization. A Christian’s desire is to seek the acceptance of God. One could summarize this by the following statement; **“The more one cares about what God thinks the less one cares about what people think”** (see I Thes. 2:4).

Our next issue will continue to look at the peculiar nature of God’s people.

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# DILIGENCE

*“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11*

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

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Issue 2

## A Peculiar People

The Word of God is written for mankind. When we take a close look at the New Testament it is mostly written to those who have chosen to follow Jesus Christ. These followers are spoken of as a “Peculiar People.”

*Titus 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” KJV*

*I Peter 2:9 “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;” KJV*

If you are studying along with us you will notice that in the NIV translation of the Bible the word “peculiar” is translated “...a people that are his very own...” and “...a people belonging to God...” respectively. A close look at the Greek word used in these passages indicates “beyond ordinary” or “for acquisition”. This would indicate that God expects us to be unusual or different, not ordinary as compared to those who have not been acquired (or bought) by Him by being baptized into the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

It is through baptism that God adopts us into a unique relationship with Him. We become adopted sons of God through His Son’s blood. This can be clearly understood from the following passages of scripture.

*Galatians 3:26-29 “For you are all Sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.” NAS*

*Galatians 4:4-5* “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” NAS

*Romans 8:16-17* “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” NAS

During the next several issues of *Diligence* we will be discussing various reasons why this term “peculiar” applies to those Christians who are dedicated to following the Word of God. In this issue, we will discuss the first three of those reasons.

### **Followers of Christ accept that the Bible is the Word of God**

God’s peculiar people do not make excuses for the Bible’s contents but study to understand and accept Biblical Truth.

We are sanctified by the truth found in the Bible. To be sanctified is to be set apart from the world for service to God. For our purposes we will refer to those who are sanctified as the Church or the Body.

*John 17:17* “Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth.” NIV

Many people in the world are religious. Some claim to be followers of Christ but treat the Bible as nothing more than a source of information and deny its claim of being the inspired Word of God. This denial allows them the opportunity to exclude parts of Scripture they may not wish to follow. Let’s refer again to:

*II Timothy 3:16-17* “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” NAS

### **Followers of Christ are added to the Church by God**

Please read Acts 2:38-47. From the beginning of the Church, God added to the Body those that followed his instructions concerning repentance and baptism for remission of sins.

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In contrast, man’s religious organizations use rules and/or approval of members to be counted as a part of their particular group or denomination. These rules might require such things as a vote, or even signing a creed or covenant. Many pseudo Christian groups teach that baptism is a requirement to join their fellowship of believers rather than understanding that it is for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38 states clearly that believers were baptized for remission of sins. Baptism is God’s method of placing us in contact with the blood of Christ. Using baptism for reasons other than the forgiveness of sin is a denial of baptism’s God given purpose. Read I Peter 3:20-21.

God will deal harshly with those who do not acknowledge that salvation comes only through the blood of Christ. Hebrews 10:28-29 states the value God places on His Son’s blood.

*“Anyone who rejected the Law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” NIV*

Since sin is what separates us from God and baptism is His method of removing sin, He cannot add us to His Church if we are not baptized for remission of sins. There is power in the blood. His word is truth and we must follow it. Our need to know the will of the Father is paramount to our ability to accept it.

*Matthew 7:21-23* “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” NIV

### **Followers of Christ are peculiar in status**

No member of the Body of Christ is any more or any less valuable to the Body. God adds every member to the Body in the very same way. Every person whom He has added is a vital part of the Church. I Corinthians 12:12-26 states:

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