

From the Bits and Pieces Series (#467) by Elder Ralph Harris
SPECIAL PEOPLE FOR SPECIAL PLACES

What a strange position do those occupy who have been crucified unto the world, and the world unto them (Gal. 4:14)! How strange do they appear to those who know nothing of death to sin and to the love thereof! They are a peculiar people indeed (Titus 2:15), not only in the commonly accepted sense of the word, but more so in the sense of being distinctive and particular in God's eyes. He has imparted gifts and graces unto them that separates them from the ungodly and makes them strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Heb. 11:13). Divine inspiration describes them as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (I Peter 2:9). And it reveals that they have been placed in that position in order that they should show forth the praises of the One who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. In a word, the Lord has chosen them to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth (Deut. 7:6). And because they are thus singled out for this unique favor they are despised and resented by those who are strangers to this blessing. Christ expressed it this way: "*Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*" (John 15:19). Like Joseph of old, who was graciously chosen of the Lord to fill a special place, God's peculiar people are likewise the objects of the special scorn and contempt of those who are not similarly favored. Jacob made for Joseph a coat of many colors, "*and when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him*" (Gen. 37:3-4). Hence, if the Lord has singled us out His for special favors, we may also expect that the world will single us out for its special contempt. The world does not want the things that God confers upon His people, but they also do not want anyone else to have them either.

A special people must be given special grace. Since special favors and blessings bring on special trials and conflicts, it is essential that the recipients of such favors be upheld and sustained by an extraordinary measure of grace and strength. A good example is Moses, who was raised to a unique position of leadership. But look at the magnitude of the responsibility and burden that went along with that position. Look at the trial and heartache his own people often brought upon him. He did not volunteer for the position he was placed in. In fact he didn't want it (See Exodus 4). But that was the work the Lord had for him to do, and if he had not done it he would have suffered even greater miseries for his rebellion. Thus it is with all truly God-called men. By nature they would prefer an easier path, but the Lord's power overcomes their objections and makes them willing in the day of that power (Psalm 110:3). And He equips them for whatever He requires of them. Oft times they are fearful and are filled with dread because of the things it falls their lot to do, but they

go forth, "*faint, yet pursuing*" and trusting in the One who has promised never to leave them nor forsake them.

A great deal more could be said along this line, but I find myself already overwhelmed with the subject and I think perhaps it is best to leave it with these few words for the reader's consideration and meditation. Suffice it to say, that if the world hates you, you are in good company, for it hated the Lord before you (See John 15:18-19). He sent His disciples out, not as popular and high paid ecclesiastics, but rather "*as sheep in the midst of wolves*" (Matt. 10:16). "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" (II Cor. 2:16). —Elder Ralph Harris