

1. The Peculiar People of God

The Word “peculiar” is found in Titus 2:14. Christians are the peculiar people of God. We use the word sometimes when we speak of something odd or strange. But that is not its use here. The word is translated from a Greek word which is made up of two words, one which means “around,” as a circle, and the other which means “to be.” It can be charted by a dot within a circle. This will help us to understand the meaning of the combined word. As the circle is around the dot, so God is around each one of His saints. The circle monopolizes the dot, has the dot all to itself. So God has His own all to Himself. They are His own private unique possession. He has reserved them for Himself. The expression in I Thessalonians 1:1, “The church of the Thessalonians in God,” has in it the same idea, for the Greek case is locative of sphere. That is, it is in the sphere of God, circumscribed by God, surrounded by Him.

This is a place of high privilege. In I Peter 2:7, the Greek has it, “Unto you who believe, is the preciousness.” That is, the preciousness of Jesus is imputed to us. He becomes our preciousness in the eyes of the Father as He becomes our righteousness before the law. The Son dwells in the bosom of the Father, closest to the Father’s affections. Marvelous grace, that we sinners saved by grace are brought into that favored place closest to the Father’s affections. The Father loves us as much as He loves His only begotten Son. What a pillow on which to rest our weary hearts when going through a testing time.

This is also a place of protection. Place a dot outside of the circle, and draw an arrow from that dot to the dot inside the circle. Label that dot a temptation. As the arrow cannot reach the dot except it go through the circle, so no temptation can reach us except it go through the permissive will of God first. As we walk in the center of God’s will, He will not permit the Devil to confront us with a temptation too great for us, but will provide us with the necessary faith and spiritual strength to overcome it. Victory over sin is a guaranteed fact when we are in the center of God’s will. Put another dot outside the circle. Run an arrow to the dot inside. Label the outside dot “a trial or testing time.” As the arrow cannot reach the dot inside unless it goes through the circle, so no time of testing, no sorrow, can reach the child of God who dwells in the center of His will, unless it comes through the permissive will of God, and when it reaches us, God sees to it that all needed grace is given to bear that trial. He is the God of all grace who comforts us in all our afflictions. And this is what Paul means in I Corinthians 10:13 when he says, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” The Greek word translated “temptation” has two meanings, first, “a time of testing or trial,” second, “a solicitation to do evil.” We are the peculiar people of God, all His own, closest to His affections, under His protecting care, the recipients of all needed comfort and grace.

God in His wisdom plans the test and limits the temptation. God in His love sends the test, and permits the temptation. God in His grace meets the test, and overcomes the

temptation. In His wisdom He plans and limits. The purpose of Christian suffering is that it is a means whereby sin is put out of our lives and likeness to Jesus produced. "We must be ground between the millstones of suffering before we can become bread for the hungry multitudes." In His love He sends and permits. Christian suffering shows God's love for that saint. God wants him more to Himself. In His grace He meets and overcomes. The grace of God is sufficient to surmount every difficulty, comfort every sorrow, overcome any temptation.