

Have we lost our identity??

Identity Theft is a serious problem for people today:

INTRODUCTION:

- 1 God demanded and desired His people in the Old Testament to be different from the world:
 - a *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. (Deu 7:6)*
 - b *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. (Deu 14:2)*
 - c *The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. (Deu 28:9)*

- 2 So it is today – God has a holy people to Himself:
 - a *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: (1Pe 2:9)*
 - b *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. (Rom 8:33)*
 - c *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (Col 3:12)*

- 3 But - the question is asked – “Who are the chosen, who are elect, the peculiar people today?”
 - a We are asked that question quite often.
 - b We are identified by the rude, malicious “religious” people as “that group who thinks they are the only ones going to heaven.”
 - c We are even asked that question – not by the majority of people seeking info – but in a slanderous, self-accusing way.

- 4 Let me be quick to say I am not afraid nor ashamed to answer that question on any occasion. We will reserve the short answer till the end of the lesson.

We have established the fact that God has identified a group of people that He considered to be His people in the Old and New Testaments

I GOD HAS ALWAYS DEMANDED OBEDIENCE FROM HIS PEOPLE

- A Patriarchal Age
 - 1 *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen 2:16-17)*
 - 2 *And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2Pe 2:5)*

- B Mosaic Age
 - 1 *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (Exo 19:5)*
 - 2 *Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. (Deu 11:26-28)*

C Christian Age

- 1 ***Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Heb 5:8-9)***
- 2 ***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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Mat 7:21-23)***
- 3 ***If ye love me, keep my commandments. (Joh 14:15)***
- 4 ***And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. (1Jn 2:3-5)***
- 5 ***Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14)***

We have noticed God has always had a select group of people who were His – that selection was maintained by their obedience to His word.

II WHO IS THAT GROUP OF PEOPLE TODAY?

- A We need to consider the claim made by Christ that He would establish His church: ***And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Mat 16:18)***
- 1 Joel had prophesied that deliverance would come when the Holy Spirit was poured out from heaven (Joel 2:28-32)
 - 2 Isaiah had said the Lord's house would be established in the top of the mountains (Jerusalem) (Isa 2:2-3)
 - 3 We know from Paul's writings that the house of God today is the church (1 Tim 3;15).
 - 4 We read from the pen of Luke that on the Day of Pentecost (50th day from the crucifixion of Christ) that the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven and that Peter said this was the fulfillment of Joel (Acts 2:1-4; 2:14-16)
 - 5 Thus we know that the church Jesus promised to build was built on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem - any so-called church built after that would not fit the prophecies of the church as revealed in the Bible.
- B When the church was established, how are those described who entered it and at what point?
- 1 Peter was asked on that occasion what to do to have forgiveness for killing the Christ (2:37-38).
 - 2 Those who were moved by their faith to be obedient are described as follows: ***Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Act 2:41)***
 - 3 There was a command given and about 3,000 obeyed that command being baptized and added on that day. But added to what?
 - 4 Luke writes: ***Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Act 2:47)***
 - a Here we are told those being saved were added by the Lord.
 - b They were added to the church – the church Jesus had promised and which had been established on that day.

- 5 Question: Which church was it?
- a Clearly the Bible says the saved were added.
 - b Therefore **ALL** the saved were added to the same church by the Lord.
 - c Which church were they added to in A.D. 33?????????
 - d Has the word of God changed since then???????????
 - e If the word of God has NOT changed since then – does God still add ALL the saved to the same church?????????????

- C God had much to say about the one and only church his Son paid for:
- 1 It is called the body of Christ – ***And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (Col 1:18)***
 - 2 There is but ONE body: ***There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (Eph 4:4)***
 - 3 Jesus is the Savior of the body: ***For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (Eph 5:23).....This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph 5:32)***
 - 4 Since Jesus is the Savior of the body and the body is the church – He is the Savior of the church. Which one?

- D The group of people today are those who are obedient to the word of God.
- 1 These have been called out of darkness and have been obedient being added to the church.
 - 2 These have been added to the Lord's house (family).
 - 3 These have been baptized into the body (1 Cor 12:13).
 - 4 So these have been obedient and have been added to the church – baptized into the body – baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27).

III **HOW MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS DOES THE LORD HAVE TODAY?**

- A Those obedient are added to the church - the body.
- 1 The same Lord that did the adding then – does the adding now.
 - 2 The same Lord adds the saved to the same church He did in the 1st century.
- B Today - if there are two groups then there MUST be two different Lords adding the saved to two different churches!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 1 ***Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Heb 13:8)***
 - 2 ***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (Jas 1:17)***
 - 3 ***For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (Psa 119:89)***
- C The Lord has the very same place He adds the obedient today as he did then!!!!!!
- D Given the Bible facts that show clearly and concisely that there is only one place of salvation, why then do some members hedge on answering the question or why are they ashamed of those who answer it correctly?
- 1 Sheer ignorance some times
 - 2 Fear – fear of being put out of certain circles: ***Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (Joh 12:42-43)***

- 3 Some try to justify their families at all costs: ***He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (Mat 10:37-38)*** – explain the various situations they try to justify

CONCLUSION:

- 1 Now back to our original thought about election: elect – Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (Col 3:12)
- a ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (Col 3:1).....In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Col 2:11-13).....To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Col 1:2)***
- b Paul wrote to those who at Colosse were in Christ (1:2) – having been baptized (2:11-13) - seeking the things of God first (3:1) – these are the elect (3:12)!!!!!!!
- 2 The question: “Are members of the church the only ones going to heaven?” – is easy to answer – because the obedient who are added to the church of our Lord by the Lord are the saved – the saved obviously are the ones who are baptized and added to the Lord. Since they are added to ONLY one place – then yes the only ones who are members of the church to which the Lord adds are the ones being saved.
- 3 So the short answer is YES – only members of the Lord’s church are saved. Are you one of those??