

God's Jewels

Back in the 70's I was baptised into the Church of God in the UK, and soon afterwards I came to Australia. Some 13 years later, I returned and sought out my friends in that church, but many had fallen away and almost forgotten what they once knew. The few who still remain in that church, which has even rejected its God given title 'Church of God', believe they are being faithful by remaining, but are gradually being polluted by the false teaching which they receive from ministers who have not had the courage to stand up for God's word, which tells us that we can be defiled by an apostate church, until we are no longer fit for God's Kingdom. Revelation 14:4, *'These are they who were not defiled with women; [false churches] for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.'*

How many of them, then, will become God's jewels? Malachi 3:17-18, *'And they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him. Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not.'*

It's hard for us to comprehend the fact that God already knows. He knows which of us will serve as Kings and Priests. He even knows just how many cities, towns or villages we will rule in His Glorious Kingdom here on this earth, because He does not dwell in time as we do. He has often carried his prophets and apostles forward in time to see the future and these events are described in the Bible as prophecy or apocalyptic. God is the Lord of Time – a time lord as science fiction would have it. As a result of that foreknowledge, He already knows who will make it. Romans 8:29, *'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.'* He knew us even before He created this world, Ephesians 1:4, *'According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.'*

Understand, it is not that God determines who will make it, but simply that he knows what choices we will make because He has been there – He has watched us decide! So, your future still depends on the choices you will make and it is possible that this message could influence the way you make those choices. I hope it does, because that future will see this Earth returned to beautiful perfection, and you could help create it! You see, God has given us guidance on the reasons *why* He chooses some to become His precious jewels. Malachi 3:16, *'Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.'*

My wife has some jewels – two diamonds and a ruby in the ring I gave her on our engagement, and some pearls in a necklace which my mother left to her. To her they are very precious and that's what the Hebrew word for jewel implies – a special treasure, Deuteronomy 7:6, *'For you are a holy people unto the LORD your God: the LORD your God has chosen you to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.'* Originally, God chose the nation of Israel to be His example to the world, but our Israelite nations have let Him down. Now, He has chosen spiritual Israelites of all the nations in their stead. Romans 9:6,8, *'Not as though the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel:That is, They who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the descendants.'*

Neither has God chosen the rich and mighty. He has chosen just ordinary folk like you and me so that eventually all people will see they they too can join God's family, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, *'For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.'*

So, exactly *why* has He chosen us? Malachi 3:16a *'Then they **that feared** the LORD spoke often one to another.'* This word 'fear' is not the kind of fear a child experiences – it rather means to stand in awe, to revere the power and position of God, and to give Him due and proper respect, Deuteronomy 10:12-13, *'And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but **to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command you this day for your good?'*** That sort of fear prompts us to walk in all His ways and to love him and serve him with all our heart. If we do that, there is no need to ever fear in any other sense. It means to serve Him ALONE, Joshua 24:14, *'Now therefore **fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River, and in Egypt; and serve you the LORD.'***

Always the danger to God's people has been idolatry. Even today some of God's people are threatened with excommunication if they speak out against the dominion of man's government inside the church rather than God's government, which is simply the word of God. But that word emboldens them to speak out against such idolatry, Matthew 10:28, *'And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'* So, if we fear God we need never fear the power of men, even those in God's church who award themselves grand titles like President, Pope or Pastor General!

Today there are many who call themselves Christians, who praise God's name and claim to be 'born again', but the best measure of our spiritual life is our obedience. As Jesus said, in Matthew 7:21, *'Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven.'* And what is God's will? Ecclesiastes 12:13, *'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and **keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.'*** Not just some, but ALL of God's commandments, including the fourth! Some, who believe themselves to be Christians, and believe that they keep His commandments, do not actually keep the fourth, Exodus 20:10!

That kind of fear is the first step towards becoming one of God's jewels! That kind of fear means that we should diligently study God's word ourselves, to make sure that we are not being deceived, as most have been, *'And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who **deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him'*** Revelation 12:9. So, that word 'fear' describes our reaction to our recognition that the Creator of the universe, with all His awesome power has actually chosen *us*, of all the people in the world!

As a result, God's people are willing to put aside false gods and false churches which refuse to honour God's word, in diligent and obedient reverence and respect. It is that respect or 'fear' which has caused God to choose *us* out of all the millions on this earth who, if asked their religion would reply- Christian. Christ explained that in Matthew 22:14, *'For many are called, but few are chosen.'*

In Malachi 3:16 we see another characteristic of God's jewels. *'They ... spoke often one to another'*. Did you get that? We can't become jewels in isolation, separate from God's people! The saints need fellowship and teaching – it says in Psalm 66:16, *'Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me'* NIV. A fellowship is part of the edification or building up of God's saints. They meet together and by talking of what God is doing in their lives, they uplift and encourage each other. They speak of His divine intervention in their lives, His blessings and what they have learned from His word. They tell of their own needs and troubles and receive the help and advice of their brothers and sisters, as well as the teaching of the elders. This fellowship helps them to learn how to serve others, preparing them for their future, outgoing role as Kings and Priests in God's Kingdom, and you can't do that alone. Together, they worship and praise God, Ephesians 5:19-21 *'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.'*

Malachi 3:16, *'.....and the LORD listened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.'* So, He placed their name in the Book of Life, Revelation 20:12, *'And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is **the book of life**. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.'* ESV

That's how we become special to God, Psalm 4:3, *'But know that the LORD has set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.'* We become so special to God because He then looks on us just as we do our own children, Isaiah 49:15, *“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, **yet I will not forget you.**”* Those of us who are parents know exactly how that feels! We hurt when they hurt and we glory in their success. His eye is always upon us as He leads us towards a glorious future in His Kingdom, where even the physical kings of the earth will look upon us with awe, Isaiah 62:2, *'The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.'* NIV. Even now He is ever ready to help and protect us, for, as it says in Zechariah 2:8, *'.....he who touches you, touches the apple of his eye.'*

God's jewels will be spared the worst of the Great Tribulation which is to come upon this earth as a result of mankind's sins, Malachi 3:17, *'And they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him.'* 'In that day' indicates the tribulation which will occur just before Christ's Kingdom, when God will spare us from the worst of the punishment which will afflict the whole earth.

You see, God has great plans for all of His people, who will go on to serve in different roles in His Kingdom. But that doesn't mean that we will never experience trials and even persecution in our lives, Revelation 3:19, *'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.'* We are to be zealous for the instruction which God's Word provides, and struggle to apply it in our lives, but, like any loving parent we can expect that God will chasten us to keep us on the right track!

As we saw earlier, we have been called, we have been chosen, but we need to remain faithful in order to gain our promised reward, Revelation 17:14b, *'...and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.'*

Finally, God provides the answer to the question posed by some in Malachi 3:14, *'You have said, “it is useless to serve God,” and “What gain is it to do his bidding, to walk in penitent garb before the Lord of hosts?”* Moffatt. We find the answer in Malachi 3:18, *'Then shall you return, and discern*

between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not.' God explains exactly how we will do this in Revelation 20:4, '*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years,*' and 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, '*Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know you not that we shall judge angels, how much more things that pertain to this life?'* We will rule here on this earth and judge between the righteous and the wicked. Kings will bow before us, even great emperors who have ruled empires in the past, men like Genghis Khan and Julius Caesar! Isaiah 49:23, "*Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.*"

And so my brothers and sisters, as we live our very ordinary lives dealing with personal relationships and day to day problems, making judgments and choices as we go along, let's remember that those choices we make will determine whether or not we will gain the reward God has promised to His faithful people described in Daniel 7:27, '*And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'*

That is a kingdom fitting for the precious jewels of God!

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