

The Church Part 11: God's Chosen People in the World

Deuteronomy 12:29-32; John 15:18-19, 17:6-24

© Rev. Nollie Malabuyo, September 10, 2023 (Big Springs Community Church)

Dear congregation of Christ: Consider this statement: “God makes Himself felt in the heart of each person. He also respects the culture of all people... God is open to all people. He calls everyone. He moves everyone to seek Him and to discover Him through creation.” This was written by Pope Francis, and it shows his universalism and Arminianism. Universalism because “[God] calls everyone... moves everyone to seek him.” If God calls and moves everyone, then everyone will be saved. Arminianism because God calls and moves everyone, but it depends on each person’s “free will” to seek God. Therefore, only those who exercise their own minds and hearts to come to God will be saved.

The Bible clearly teaches that God only saves those whom he had chosen before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4ff). It is only *“according to the purpose of his will... and of his gracious grace”* that he elected some people from out of all humanity to be saved (Eph 1:4-11). In all Scripture, God calls these chosen people “God’s people” (1 Pet 2:10), “my people” (Exo 9:1; Isa 1:3), and “chosen ones” (Psa 105:6; Col 3:12).

God commands his people to worship only him, and not any other gods, for all other gods are false gods (Exo 20:3-6). And his people must worship him only according to his revealed word. No man-made ceremonies, innovations, songs, prayers, and words are to be included in true worship. God commanded the Israelites his people then (Deut 4:2; 12:32) and all God’s people today (Rev 22:18-19) not to add to or subtract from his word. Before they entered the Promised Land, God warned them not to copy the exciting, rambunctious, and noisy worship of the pagan people in the land (Deut 12:29-31). They failed miserably in obeying these commandments.

We, the church, God’s people today, are also commanded and warned against all kinds of idolatry and false worship in most evangelical churches around us and in our whole nation. As Israel was judged by the LORD because of their pagan worship, so also churches today will be judged because of its false worship copied from our pagan world and culture. As one pastor put it, “The church is not *against* the world. Instead, it has *become* the world.” Since the world hates Christ and his word, they hate churches that preach the true gospel of Christ from Scriptures. Nevertheless, our Lord said in his prayer that he has sent his people into the world.

Therefore, our theme today is, **The Church Part 11: God’s Chosen People in the World**, under three headings.

“How Did These Nations Serve Their Gods”?

Many churches today call the Lord’s Day worship service as “worship experience.” Emotional, romantic songs cater to feelings. Only during singing these songs do they have a sense of God “ministering,” or “being real,” or “speaking” to them. The word of God is merely a little decoration to these worship “feelings.” A shocking evidence of today’s pagan worship is the worshipers’ terms

used for worship. They want to have a “worship fix,” or they are “worship junkies,” language used to refer to drug addiction.

“Worship” and youth concerts are preferred over attending Lord’s Day worship services. In these events, rock, hip-hop, and rap are performed and sung: the singers perform with their instruments blasting, the “worshippers” dance alluringly and shout at the top of their voices. We find such scenes only in pagan events where there is plenty of alcohol, drugs, sex, and even violence.

Last Saturday during the Labor Day weekend, 60,000 pagan worshipers were stranded at the Burning Man Festival in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert because a heavy downpour turned the location into a flooded, muddy mess. Most reporters cover the event because there is much drugs, nudity and sex in the search for “radical self-expression and self-reliance.” On Saturday, the organizers closed the gate so that no one could go in or out. This was on the same day that a 40-foot wooden effigy called “The Man” was supposed to be burned.

This burning of an effigy of man is similar to ancient pagan sacrifices—for example, among ancient Druids—where human beings were burned. They sometimes used what is known today as “the Wicker Man,” made of twigs and branches, and filled the effigy with grains, animals, and even human beings. The “Burners” form a procession circle, the Burning Man is ignited, and one writer says of her feelings, “You experience something personal, something new to yourself, something you’ve never felt before. It’s an epiphany, it’s primal, it’s newborn.” This is out-and-out paganism.

Although modern, contemporary worship does not include this pagan ritual, the principle is evident: God’s people in the church are forbidden to imitate the worship of the pagan world. Our reading in Deuteronomy 12 mentions the abominable burning of children by the pagan Canaanites. How is this child sacrifice practiced today in our nation? By 63 million pagan abortionists since 1973. By misgendering and transgendering little children.

The irony of this false, pagan worship is the more churches copy the world’s pagan worship, the more the world hates Christians.

“The World Hates You”

Jesus solemnly warned his disciples that the unbelieving world hates him, and therefore, they hate his disciples, his people, his church. Why? Because God’s people are not of the world. Because God has chosen his people, his treasured possession, to be holy and separate from the world. This means that our hearts and minds are opposed to the world’s hearts and minds. They would love us if we joined them, as the ancient saying goes, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” Since we are in this world, the world demands, “When in the world, do as the world does.”

This is in complete opposition to 1 John 2:15-16, *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”* If then our minds and hearts conform to the world’s hearts and minds, then our Father is the devil himself, for the unbelieving world is under the wicked kingdom of Satan and darkness (John 8:44). John also writes that the world does not know Christ (John 1:10). The reason why the world hates us is because they have no knowledge of Christ.

Why does the world hate us, God's people, and our Christian faith? They hate us because of our doctrines based on the Holy Scriptures. We have faith in God the Creator, and not in man the creature, whose god is evolution. We believe that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, not basically good. We believe in exclusivity, not in universalism, that only those who have faith alone in Christ alone as Savior and Lord are heaven-bound, and everyone else is hell-bound. They hate us because of our worship based alone on what Scripture commands (Deut 4:2, 12:32), without the idolatrous, immoral fanfare and entertainment that they love. They hate us when they look at our godly and righteous behavior, in contrast to their wicked desires and pleasures.

Last week, I read an article written by truthxchange.com, "Wokism, the New Pagan Morality," an analysis of America's anti-Christian culture called "wokism." I will read a few excerpts for your consideration.

Unlike biblical morality, this [Wokism] system does not include forgiveness. Whites remain guilty forever and blacks are doomed to be forever victims. In addition, there is no notion of original sin, no divine justice, and no atoning work of Christ to wash us clean. Alas, this is a false pagan morality in which God is absent. Such thinking has entered many churches under the appeal of moralism.

Current woke morality is based upon a spirituality that emerges from Eastern religion, in which there is no Creator God. Two of its graduates founded [an institute] which claims to explore "new ideas around creativity and the brain, body work, spirituality, leadership, Gestalt, plant medicine, citizen diplomacy, super humanism, the survival of bodily death, Extraterrestrial intelligence, and more."

We are in the situation of early Christianity, surrounded by pagan Rome, where citizens do not know the God of the Bible. Romans 1:25 was the original Christian apologetic. It doubtless must be ours. It describes two views of existence. Either you worship creation as divine, or you worship God as the divine Creator of everything. *"They exchanged the truth about God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."*

"Worship" and "service" of God is only truly possible when we meet the gospel concerning God's Son. The message of the Christian faith, unlike Wokism, is not moralism but undeserved grace. The only truly moral human being was crucified to remove our sins by his atoning death on the cross. In the woke utopia there is no love. In Jesus we meet the love of God for sinners.

The author cites an example from last February, when Dennis Prager, a Jewish conservative, and Charlie Kirk, a Christian, were condemned by 47 faculty members of Arizona State University before they spoke at a conference simply and uncomplicatedly entitled "Health, Wealth and Happiness." These professors condemned Prager and Kirk as, "white nationalist provocateurs ... purveyors of hate who have publicly attacked women, people of color, the LGBTQ community, [and] institutions of our democracy." The Critical Race Theory says that "the moral system to which Christians adhere automatically makes them an oppressor class. [My comment: So, you in this church are all oppressors.] They should never be allowed to force their oppressive morals on oppressed sexual minorities."

Such is the hatred of Christ and Christians by the unbelieving world. How do we respond to this unbelief and hatred? The article asks, “How do we address—with the gospel—a culture that has lost its view of classic morals?”

“I Have Sent Them into the World”

In his prayer at Gethsemane the night before he was crucified, Jesus prayed for all his disciples then, and all his disciples who would believe in him through the preaching of the gospel. His answer to the question, “How do we respond to the world’s unbelief and hatred?” is in this prayer. He prayed to his Father in heaven that he has given his disciples the truths of his world. He says that those who would become his disciples are only those whom the Father has given him before the creation of the world.

Jesus prayed, *“I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world”* (14). Yet, Jesus also prayed, *“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one”* (15). In the midst of this hatred by the world, he asked his Father not to remove them from the world, but preserve and protect them from the devil and his evil kingdom of the world. Why? Continuing his prayer, our Lord said to his Father, *“As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world”* (18).

Why are we, God’s people, God’s church, still in this wicked world for 2,000 years since Christ lived, died, rose from the grave, and ascended into heaven? Because he has appointed his people to preach the gospel to every creature and to all nations of the world. His Great Commission to his disciples includes preaching to the unbelieving woke people. We do not know whom God has given his Son to save before the creation of the world, so we are to preach the true gospel of Christ to everyone in the church every Lord’s Day. We are to be witnesses for Christ to all our families, friends, colleagues at work or school, and those we meet in the marketplace. We are not to be scared or intimidated that they might be anti-Christian woke people who hate us because we are Christians. This is the gospel work appointed by Christ for us.

Beloved Christian friends: You are God’s people whom he chose to save before the creation of the world. But he chose you not to sit idly around, doing nothing for Christ. He chose you to be saved in order that *“we should be holy and blameless before him”* (Eph 1:4). In eternity past, he has also prepared the good works that we would do for him (Eph 1:10). And one of these good works he appointed for us is to be faithful witnesses for Christ in our words, deeds and thoughts, so that when some of the unbelieving world sees and hears them, they too might believe and glorify God when Jesus returns from heaven.

But we do not know the day or the hour of his return. So as we wait and watch for his Second Coming, we are to do what he has appointed us to do. Even when we are hated by the world because we are Christians, we are to persevere in our faith, doctrines, worship, preaching the true gospel, holy living, and witnessing for Christ. In so doing, we face persecution, ridicule and harassment. So, in the midst of all this hatred from the unbelieving world, we are to always pray, “Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!” Yet, while we pray this, we are to be witnesses for Christ in this anti-Christian world.