

**Thank you, Baldwin Borland
Speaker for today**

“Rewards” for Faithfulness

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
Revelation 2:10

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”
Revelation 21:4

January Birthdays

14 Juanita Small

January Anniversaries

8 Bob & Debbie Pescador

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Special Treasure

By Kevin Cauley

When God brought the children of Israel out of bondage, He instructed Moses to tell them this: *“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine”* (Exodus 19:5).



God intended for Israel to have a special relationship with Him beyond that of all the other nations. The people, however, rebelled, and did not fulfill God’s desires for them to be this special people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). So, God made a New Covenant through His Son, Jesus. In this covenant, God has reaffirmed His desire to have a special relationship. Titus 2:14 states, *“[Jesus] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”* Peter affirms that message in 1 Peter 2:9, *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* What God could not accomplish through the physical nation of Israel, He accomplishes through the spiritual nation of Israel, the church.

The word for “special” has the connotation of keeping something around as a treasure. I have a small “treasure box” in my bedroom in which I keep mementos from special occasions in my life. They are not valuable to anyone else, but to me they are priceless because of what they mean to me. They are my special treasures. That is a limited illustration because people are so much more valuable than things. God is saying, “I value you above everything else because of what you mean to me.” Do we see ourselves as that special people?

Again and Again

John M. Buttrey II

Again is a word used, again and again, to describe repetitive actions. Many times, those repetitive actions are not good. For example, consider the book of Judges. Again and again, the word again is used to describe repeated mistakes by the children of Israel.

*“Now the sons of Israel **again** did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.”* Judges 3:12 (Emphasis Mine)

*“Then the sons of Israel **again** did evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died.”* Judges 4:1 (Emphasis Mine)

*“Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel **again** played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god.”* Judges 8:33 (Emphasis Mine)

*“Then the sons of Israel **again** did evil in the sight of the Lord, served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the*

sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him.” Judges 10:6 (Emphasis Mine)

“Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.” Judges 13:1 (Emphasis Mine)

What a sad picture of disobedience committed again and again against God. Unfortunately, this was nothing new with Israel. One Psalmist described the disobedience of their fathers with these words:

*“**Again** and **again** they tempted God, And pained the Holy One of Israel.”* Psalm 78:41 (Emphasis Mine)

When they would finally recognize their sin, again and again they would turn back to God.

*“Will You not Yourself revive us **again**, That Your people may rejoice in You.”* Psalm 85:6 (Emphasis Mine)

*“O God of hosts, turn **again** now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine.”* Psalm 80:14 (Emphasis Mine)

In contrast to the **again and again** sinning of the people, was the **again and again** mercy of God (cf. Lamentations 3:21-23). As often as they turned back to God, He was willing to help them. When we look at our own lives, how often could our sinning be described as **again and again**? Yet, because of our relationship in Christ, we have all enjoyed the **again and again** mercy of God! For this, we should praise Him, **again and again**.
