

## The Culture of the Church

Multiculturalism is to embrace styles and customs of another nation without judging them though they might be different from yours. Difference itself does not make something wrong. How true that can be when it comes to weather, names, skin color, language, governments, environment, work-style, clothing colors and foods.

Many Christians feel today that they have a better chance of relating to the world for Christ's sake if they can be as close to another culture as possible. And in some areas this is good and necessary. See 1 Corinthians 9.

But may we not forget that in this sinful world we have been called out to be "*an holy nation*" unto God, a "*peculiar people*" – separated unto Him for His own pleasure. And living separated unto the Lord and His desires will form a distinct culture of its own. Let's not sacrifice Christian identity and holy culture on the altar of worldly acceptance.

Israel was a physical nation to whom the Lord said, "*I the LORD am holy and have severed you from among other people, that ye should be mine*". And the church is also called to "*come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord ... and I will receive you.*" Israel would be different from all other nations forming a unique godly culture. The same principle is true today for the called out church from among the condemned nations. Let's see what we learn by comparing 7 major features of Israel's holy calling as a physical nation and the church's holy calling as His spiritual nation now.

### **A Holy Culture that is Meant to Characterize God's People Wherever They Are**

*Israel* – **Sexual relationships:** to be different than the other nations. No incest, etc.  
CHURCH – Sexual relations only in a marriage commitment between a man and a woman.

*Israel* – **Outward appearance:** different dress, priestly clothing, blue fringes, etc.  
CHURCH – Men and women are to have a difference in their hair length; woman's head covered at times, the man uncovered. Women not to be adorned in expensive array and precious jewels – to have a look that does not draw wrong attention to her outward body.

*Israel* – **Worshippers of God His Way:** occupied with bringing God physical offerings.  
CHURCH – all as priests offering up spiritual sacrifices such as praise (in a world that doesn't), giving to Lord's work, the remembrance of the Lord Jesus at His supper.

*Israel* – **Good Works:** justice and morality to characterize their social life.  
CHURCH – Loving the Christian family and doing honest and good deeds unto all men.

*Israel* – **Diet:** Forbidden to take in foods that God called unclean – only the clean.  
CHURCH – To have an appetite for the sincere milk of His Word and getting fat or rich on the clean "*word of Christ*". Feeding in the church where the "*word of truth*" is served

and not the unclean junk food of worldly entertainment or bad doctrine – for you are what you eat. Will eat (digest, meditate) of the body and blood of Christ (His death for us).

*Israel* – **Speech:** Their talk was to be of the one true God and to tell their children of His redemption and righteous laws day and night.

CHURCH – Singing and giving thanks to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking kindly to each other. No coarse, profane or vulgar language but that which encourages. Witnessing of the gospel of God in His Son.

*Israel* – **A Singular Doctrine (not a Plurality):** Witnessing of the only true God Who is the Creator of all in six days. They demonstrated this by similarly resting on the seventh day so as to symbolize the one God Who rested the seventh day from all His creation.

CHURCH – In a multicultural world of error, it is to hold the “*unity of the Spirit*” or the “*unity of the faith*”. It is to be “*the pillar and ground of the truth*”. Holding solidly a singular belief of only one God, one Savior, one way, and one Lord – the Lord Jesus Christ. For salvation is only of the Lord. No one else can save.

And all who trust this “*faith in Christ*” are equally saved and blessed in a singular union of one – the church, His body – before God regardless of nationality, gender or class.

And now the church is also a culture. Don’t be ashamed of it. It’s a culture of holiness – produced by the Holy Spirit. Though personalities and style will vary, the church’s morality, appearance (modest), worship, actions, soul food, talk and beliefs will be similar among all true believers – regardless of century, country or culture. It’s a unique unity of truth and holiness transcending national borders. The true church is not connected to earthly tradition or culture but the living Head in heaven. He supplies divine wisdom through His Scriptures and power in His Spirit: new life from above.

But, while similarities exist among all Christians worldwide, it will be different than the world’s ways. It might incur the ridicule of the world and more so as the Lord’s coming gets nearer. But it marks us out as God’s children and pleases the holy Lord Jesus – for He is not ashamed of holiness.

{Some Scriptures for the truth of a holy calling. *Israel*: Lev. 20:24,26 / *Church*: 2Cor. 6:14-7:1, 1Pet:1:16, 2:9. *Sexual relationships* – *Israel*: Lev. 20 / *Church*: 1Thess. 4, 1Cor. 7. *Appearance* – *Israel*: Num. 15:38,39, Lev. 19:27,28 / *Church*: 1Tim. 2:9, 1Cor. 11. *Worship* – *Israel*: Deut. 26 / *Church*: 1Pet. 2:5, 1Cor. 11:26. *Good Works* – *Israel*: Ex. 21-23 / *Church*: Titus 2:14, Gal. 6:10. *Diet* – *Israel*: Lev. 11 / *Church*: 1Pet. 2:2,3, Col. 3:16. *Speech* – *Israel*: Deut. 6:7, 20-25 / *Church*: Eph. 4:29, 5:4, 19,20, 1Pet. 2:5,9. *Singular Doctrine* – *Israel*: Deut. 7: 1-9, Isa. 43:10 / *Church*: Eph. 4:3-6, 13, John 14:6, Heb. 2:11.}