

**GOD'S VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE**

1 Peter 2:9-10

**Intro:** In order to have a proper understanding of verses 9 and 10, it is necessary to go back at least to verse 7, and then read down to verse 9. We need to pick up the contrast which Peter was making, and which is indicated by the word “but” at the beginning of verse 9.

(Read verses 7 and 8.)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the subject of these two verses. According to verse 6 He is “precious” to God (which we all realized even before we came to this chapter), and the first statement of verse 7 indicates that our Lord is “precious” to all of us who have believed in Him for our salvation. But the remainder of verse 7 and all of verse 8 indicate that not everyone feels the same way about the Lord Jesus that we do. He is rejected by the masses of unbelievers. They stumble over Him. He is an offence to them. And all of this means that they do not want to have anything to do with Him. They feel no need for Him. And Peter concluded verse 8, as you can see, by adding the statement, “whereunto also they were appointed.”

It is very hard for most people to accept a statement like this. I have found that most of the expositors that I have read do everything to explain it away. But there it stands! And as difficult as it may be for us to accept it, it is a part of the Word of God.

We have a very similar statement in Jude 4 where Jude has written,

For there were certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God unto lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

The Apostle Paul taught the same truth in Romans 9. He taught that those of us who are saved, were ordained, or chosen by God, to be saved, but also that God has mercy on those upon whom He will have mercy, and those whom He does not intend to save, He hardens. Then Paul raised a question which he doubtless had heard many times. Let me read to you from Romans 9 beginning with verse 19:

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump

to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?  
22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Rom. 9:19-24).

Even if we did not have statements like this in Scripture, the doctrine of election would teach to us that since some are chosen to be saved, then it means that those who are not chosen will not be saved.

These are doctrines that have been neglected for a long time by the church, and so they seem like heresy to us when we first hear them. But they are designed to teach us that God is sovereign in working out His salvation for sinners, that He knows what He is doing; in fact, He has ordained what He is doing.

Now if we had a situation in the world where multitudes of people were trying to be saved, but God would not save them, then we might question such passages as this. But we don't have a situation like that. People are not seeking the Lord. People are not buying Bibles to find out how they can be saved. Instead we find widespread rejection of the Gospel, and those of us who are saved gladly give God all of the glory for saving us. He has sought us. He has broken down the barriers we raised up, has changed our stubborn wills, and granted us faith to believe in Christ. We have been falsely taught that our wills are free, and that we are the captains of our souls. But the doctrine of free will is a myth. Our wills are not free, but are in bondage to our sinful natures. Paul said in this same ninth chapter of Romans from which I have read to you, these words:

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy (Rom. 9:15-16).

And we all should remember those very familiar words in John 1:11-13:

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:11-13).

What could be clearer than that? If you have not heard these truths before,

I plead with you not to turn away from them. I think that most of you know me well enough to know that I would not teach anything that is not in the Bible. I would be afraid to. But when it is in the Bible, we must accept it, and then trust the Lord to give us the understanding that we need. I can assure you that believing the doctrine of election will give you a greater understanding of God, and a greater assurance that God knows what He is doing, and that He is fulfilling His will in every detail. Man can exercise His will in many things, but not for His own salvation. When any person wills to be saved it is because God has worked in his or her heart to make them willing, and because God also gives us the gift of faith. Remember Eph. 2:8-9.

But this is where we are in 1 Peter when we come to the end of verse 8. And we know this to be true. In our country there are many more who do not want to have anything to do with Christ, than there are people who love Him, and trust Him, and find Him precious to their souls.

But now we come to our text. And it was a miracle of God's grace that Paul could write what we have in these two verses. *In contrast with those who reject Christ, who find Him offensive, and who stumble over Him, there is another group, and I can say, a very large group, who can be described in the words that we have in verses 9 and 10. And we can say to the glory of the Lord that this describes most of us, perhaps all of us, who are here today. (Read 1 Peter 2:9, 10.)*

In verse 9 Peter began by giving us:

## **I. FOUR DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD (1 Pet. 2:9a).**

Let us notice what they are, and, hopefully, what they mean.

### **A. "A chosen generation" (v. 9a).**

Peter was not using this term the way we use it when we speak of "this generation." or a *generation of time*. One meaning of the word has to do with the time that a parent is succeeded by his child. It has been about thirty-five years. In the early days of human history when people lived up to nine hundred years, of course a generation was much longer. But Peter was not using the word in this kind of a generation.

If you remember from your reading of the book of Genesis, you have expressions like this: the generations of Adam, or the generations of Noah, or the generations of Shem, or the generations of Isaac, or the generations of Jacob, and so on. And what always follows is the record of their de-

scendants, their family. *This is the way in which Peter was using the word “generation.” We are members of “a chosen generation.”*

Now since we have been chosen by God, this is the same as saying that we are God’s chosen family. When I was born, and when you were born, our parents had no choice over what they got. They had to take us as we were. But in God’s family it is different. God has chosen all of us to be in His family. He chose us before the foundation of the world because He wanted us! We are in His family. And we are not adopted children, as I have been telling our Tuesday Class; we are children of God by birth, by the new birth. That is what Peter was speaking about in chapter 1 of this epistle, verse 23. (Read.) God has chosen each one of us to be His children, in His family. *How amazing that it, and yet what wonderful truth!*

The second description that Peter gave in verse 9 is that we are:

### **B. “A royal priesthood (v. 9).**

And Peter had been speaking of this earlier right here in chapter 2. (Read verse 5). There it was “an holy priesthood”; here it is “a royal priesthood.”

There was a priestly family in the OT. It was the family of Aaron, and they were assisted by the other members of their tribe of Levi. But now all of us are priests. Each of us has immediate access to God, and as we learned from verse 5 of this chapter we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. We don’t offer animals or birds, but we offer praise, we offer good works, we offer our gifts, but, most of all, we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices.

But what is the idea that we are “a royal priesthood”?

Well, it means that we are priests of royalty, of a King. That term is used of God as the Sovereign of the whole universe, and it is used of our Lord Jesus Christ who one day will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In carrying on his duties, a priest had the position of an intercessor. As amazing as it sounds, we share in the royal priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ! How astounding it is that we should be given such an exalted position when we are just sinners saved by the grace of God. But Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said that we are “a royal priesthood,” and that is exactly what we are.

But we have here a third description.

### C. “An holy nation” (v. 9).

I think that we all realize that a nation is a group of people who speak the same language, usually have the same religion, who live by the same laws and customs, and who occupy a certain prescribed territory. This is the way a nation is described in our dictionaries. And every part of it has special significance for us as the people of God.

Let me read Phil. 3:20-21 as it is in the NKJV:

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

As Peter had been telling those to whom he was writing that they were foreigners here on earth, it was because they had a heavenly citizenship. We have a different language from earthlings, don't we? Oh, we all speak English, but since we have been saved and made citizens of heaven, our speech has been cleaned up. And we all have the same religion, the one true religion. We all worship the Triune God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And our way of life is set forth in the most wonderful book that has ever been written. It is the Bible, the Word of God, infallible, unchanging, eternal, and living.

And the one word that is to describe all of us is the word “holy.” We seek to live separated unto God, doing that which is pleasing to Him, avoiding at all times that which is displeasing to Him, and we are daily becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

So you see a little of what is involved in our being “an holy nation.”

The fourth and last description that Peter gives to us is:

### D. “A peculiar people” (v. 9).

When I study my Bible I like to have my dictionary close by so I can look up some of the words in the King James that may have changed their meaning in the past 300 plus years. I looked up the word “peculiar,” and you probably would never guess what was given as the first meaning of the word. It was this: “Belonging to an individual, privately owned, not common.” *And this is exactly what the Greek word means which the Apostle Peter used in this verse.* We may be a peculiar people in that we are different, and appear to be strange to the people of the world, but when Peter said that we are “a peculiar people,” he meant that we are “GOD’S VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE.” **We belong to Him. We are privately**

**owned.** And Peter had been writing about this, too, hadn't he? (Read chapter 1, verses 18 and 19.)

How could the Lord have possibly expressed His delight in us in any better way?

Most of you know that our son Dwight has a married daughter in California, and that she and her husband recently had a child born to them, whom they named Connor. Courtney was talking to us right after Connor was born, and she said with the greatest of love expressed in our voice, "The Lord has given us our baby!" You parents know the thrill that that is. Now we are waiting to hear the same good news from Jason and Andrea. And it doesn't make any difference how many children you have, it is always thrilling to have a new baby come into the family.

This expression, "a peculiar people," tells us how the Lord feels about us. A verse that expresses how the Lord feels about all of us is Isa. 43:1. Let me read it to you. It was written about Israel, but it applies to all of God's children.

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine (Isa. 43:1).

Maybe you don't know exactly when you were saved, but the Lord knows the date, and He will never forget it! Isn't it the most astounding thought that we can have, to think of how the Lord loves us, and delights in us? This is a truth that will support us in any time of trouble that we might go through, but it can be our greatest joy when everything seems to be going just like we want it to go.

But now let us turn our attention to the question: Why has the Lord done all of this for us? And remember that these definitions, or descriptions, apply to all of us who know the Lord. What has been God's purpose?

## **II. GOD'S PURPOSE IN SAVING US (1 Pet. 2:9m).**

It is all "that we should show forth the praises of Him." Let me take it just that far for the moment. When Peter spoke of *the praises of the Lord*, He was speaking of all that the Lord is, and of all that He has done. It is sometimes described as *His excellencies*. The Lord did not do for us what He has done because we were worthy of it, nor because in some way we had earned it. It was all because of His love for us, a love that was not merited by us in any way.

And so we are to make His praises known throughout our lives, day after day, and night after night. And when people learn about what the Lord

has done for us, the Lord may use that to make other people realize that He will do the same for them if they come to Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We never know how our praises of the Lord may be used.

But what did Peter go on to say that the Lord has done for us, for each of us, for all of us?

### **III. WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US (1 Pet. 2:9b-10).**

There has much that Peter could say, but he has mentioned three things which I can only speak of briefly.

#### **A. He has “called” us “out of darkness into His marvelous light”(v. 9b).**

**“Darkness” stand in Scripture for ignorance. And it stands for “sin.”** We didn’t come out on our own; He “called us.” And by His grace we heard His call, and He put in our hearts the desire to come to Him. And we came, and He saved us. And our lives have been different ever since. How marvelous is His light, and how wonderful it is to walk in the light of the Lord, in the light of His precious Word.

But God has done another thing for us.

#### **B. We were not His people, but now we are His people (v. 10a).**

We are His “peculiar people,” people who belong to Him, people who are His special treasure, people who are the most special to Him. Oh, let this truth really fill your heart and delight your soul.

But there is one more point.

#### **C. We “had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (v. 10b).**

Be sure to notice that all that has to do with the praises of the Lord is what God has done for us, and not what we have done for Him. It is not even anything that we deserved.

Remember that “mercy” and *misery* go together. Our sins cause us misery, but God extends to us His mercy to deliver us from our misery. Mercy is that disposition in God to forgive us and to deliver us from the

judgment which we so much deserve. But in righteousness He could not bestow mercy except through the death of Christ for our sins. The Apostle Paul explained it in this way:

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4-7).

But mercy is not just something that has to do with the way we are saved. We need the mercies of God every day we live. And the Bible assures us that they “are new every morning” (Lam. 3:23). And God’s mercies are connected with His faithfulness. The last verse of Psalm 23 assures us that the mercy of God will pursue us and find us all the days of our lives. You all remember the verse,

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever (Psa. 23:6).

What a blessed people we are!

**Concl:** Let us not be silent about the praises of the Lord, but may our tongues always be ready to speak a word in season. We can never tell how the Lord may use our praise to bring the light of Christ to someone who is still lost in the darkness of sin, and facing eternity without Christ.