

9But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

11Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Last week we talked about identity. The crisis our nation of people is having trying to define who they are, how they fit. And we said that as christians, we have an identity given to us by God.

Peter says simply, if you have believed, this is your identity. If in fact you are a christian, this is who you are. And that identity begins with election. We'll see that again this morning as we move on in this glorious passage.

Peter tells us we are a new race. A people who are unique from all other peoples on the face of the earth, not by DNA, but because God has chosen us before the foundation of this world to belong to Him. He has called us out of this fallen world, ruled by Satan, and made us a people who are ruled by the God of heaven. Separated. Distinct. Removed and made different.

And He has made us a priesthood. A separated people that has access to Him. We are priests with access, and we are a royal priesthood, because when He comes and removes Satan and rules this world, we will come with Him and reign with Him. We are priests to the King with authority to co-reign that He will give us.

Right now Paul tells us, we're like royal heirs with tutors. Like a 7 year old king. We aren't prepared yet to reign, we're waiting for that day, but

the title is already ours. We are heir apparent. Just waiting to grow up and receive what we've already inherited.

And Peter has already told us that our inheritance is protected and waiting in heaven for us. We are royal heirs waiting for our inheritance.

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

We are royal heirs. Adopted by the King to reign with the King. We have access greater than any old testament high priest ever had. Sin is removed as far as the east is from the west.

That's a review of some of the truths we talked about last week. And this is so rich, I want to pick it up again in vs. 9

9But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

A Holy Nation. A people for God's own possession. Peter is quoting from Exodus 19:5 and 6. Moses speaking God's message to Israel;

5Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

And we noted last week that those words form a conditional statement. If, then. IF you do this, then you inherit this. And no one in Adam's race could meet the conditions.

Then one man, outside of Adam's race, Jesus, born of a virgin, Son of God, he met all of the conditions, and those of us who are chosen out of

this world, and placed IN Christ, we meet all of those conditions; In Him.

So Peter can resurrect all of these ideas from Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy, conditional things in which Israel failed, and he tells us, if you belong to Christ, all of these things are true. You are the people who meet God's conditions. In Christ.

He says we **are** *A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION*, In Christ this isn't conditional, it's an accomplished truth.

This is foundational truth. These things are fundamental to our identity. In Christ; We have become everything that Israel failed to live up to. *A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION*,

Let's think for a moment about the possibility of a Holy Nation. Have you listened to the news on the radio lately?

Out where I work the only station that comes in, mostly, is the public radio station. KNPR. And I've noticed that my average listen time has gotten short. Really short. It's so depressing that I choose not to listen. Occasionally they'll have something mildly interesting, but mostly it's just spin, and I reach for the button.

A holy nation. Mercy. We are a nation that mocks God. Continually. But then the world news comes on, and it turns out every nation on this globe is, mostly, if possible, even worse than we are.

The nations are altogether a putrid mass of filth shaking their combined fist at a God they hate.

Enter one book that tells us why that is. We are a fallen race. Spiritually dead because of sin. Dead to God. And to make matters worse, the authority to rule in this world defaulted to Satan. He is king of this place, and that explains a lot. No wonder the nations mock God.

This book is the story of the disaster. The fall. The dysfunction of spiritually dead men, ruled by an evil master who hates the Creator.

And it's the story of redemption.

How God reached into the darkness and how He had a grand plan to redeem some men from the disaster that this planet became as a result of Adam's sin and Satan's rule.

We teach the Lord's prayer to little children because the words are so very simple. A 3 year old can learn it easily and recite it back to you. But the concept that the Lord taught the disciples to pray for is so profound it could have never come from mere men.

The Lord's prayer is a petition for God to intervene in this broken fallen world. It is a prayer that asks for God to come and reign in righteousness. Come and undo the fall into sin and rebellion. Think about Peter's words that we are a Holy Nation and a people for God's possession as we compare that idea to the words in the Lord's prayer just quickly.

Our Father who is in heaven. Science teaches us that earth is just a tiny rock in the midst of immeasurable vastness. We are here on tiny earth. God is in heaven beyond the vastness.

Hallowed be Thy name. Satan wants men to worship him. Soon he will combine spiritual powers of evil with a man who will set himself up in the temple of God claiming that he is god. Meanwhile, we hallow everything else on our tiny planet, but God.

We worship the animals. We worship the weather. We bow down to global warming. We worship pipsqueek rulers. We worship dysfunctional hypocritical hollywood actors. We worship mountains and oceans and icebergs, anything but God who created everything. He says to hallow His name.

Then Jesus says to pray; *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, like it is in heaven.*

This tiny rock is in rebellion against God. Satan has the authority to reign here. On earth. The kingdoms of this world are his kingdoms. In

fact he even boasted about it to Jesus himself!

In Luke 4:6, the temptation in the wilderness; *And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.*

His boast is a lie. He doesn't give any rule to anybody unless God first allows it in His sovereignty. But never-the-less there is a partial truth. He is ruler of this world. He rules in the kingdoms of men. That's why the world is in dysfunctional chaos and getting worse by the day. Satan is the ruler of this world.

So what is Jesus telling the disciples to pray for. *Thy Kingdom come.* We're praying for the day and the hour when the authority to reign of Satan is finished, and the authority to reign of God, in His Son Jesus Christ will come.

Thy authority to reign, come. Thy kingdom come. And when that happens, and it's all described in great detail in this book; about a third of this book is prophecy that looks forward to that day, when satan is deposed and evil is crushed and Jesus rules on David's throne; when that happens the next little line in the prayer of 3 year olds happens.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. A 3 year old can say it, but our minds are barely big enough to try to encompass the truth.

The world is spinning out of control in chaos orchestrated by the ruler of this world, Satan, and all of that evil is going to be crushed. All of those evil kingdoms, all the nations, all the rulers, all of it is going to be crushed by the Stone cut out without hands of Daniel 2.

Thy will be done on earth. Just like it is in heaven. Oh my, what a cataclysm must take place for those words to ultimately come true. Because, look around you. All there is, is evil. Jesus is going to crush it, and Satan, and set up a kingdom in this world and He will rule. Evil is vanquished. Satan is vanquished. Locked up, waiting for the lake of fire.

At the end of the Lord's prayer that 3 year olds say, are the words; For. FOR!!! Because, *Thine IS the authority, the kingdom, the ownership and authority to reign, AND the power to make it happen, and the GLORY of God, Forever.*

Those things are all true. In heaven, and in God's perfect timing, they will be seen to be true here, on this tiny rebellious rock floating in the midst of the universes. Held in it's orbits by the power of God who ultimately owns everything.

Now that we've considered the vastness of God and His plan for this world, let's look again at what Peter is telling us. This is who you are. This is your identity.

He says **you are** *A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,*

In view of the plan that the Lord's prayer unfolds for this world, is there any better news than that??! He's going to come in power and violence against His enemies to depose Satan and crush evil. Who escapes??

No one escapes. No one, except for one special group. One race of people escape. Who is it? Us. He has chosen us out of this world that is perishing. He has made us royal priests. We, the chosen, seperated ones **are** *A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,*

The world wants to talk a lot about being on the "right side of history" these days. Let me tell you where the right side of history is. In view of what this book tells us, the only place you want to be found, when that cataclysm comes, and Satan is deposed, and the Stone cut out without hands is crushing all evil, the right side of history is; being a citizen of *A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,*

On that day, you want to belong to Him. You want to be charging out of heaven on a white charger clothed in fine linen white and clean that His blood purchased for you, with Him. The only safe place is to belong to Him. We want to be on the side that's winning.

Peter says, that's our identity. If we are christians, this is who we are. How spectacular is *that*?! Our position IN Christ. An elect race. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. God's own possession. Why?? Why did God do that? How?? How did it happen? Peter's going to answer those questions.

We move on in verse 9; *so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

I'm going to attack this backwards from the order Peter gives us. First How it happened. And second, why.

Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

This concept of darkness and light was difficult for me as a new christian. I tried to get my head around it. What is darkness? What is light?

If you are a photographer. A really old one, who remembers film, you understand a tiny bit more about darkness. Film was stuff that is light sensitive. Light causes a reaction in the silver halide coatings on film. So, if like me you want to dabble in the art of black and white film, and control the whole process from inception to completion, you had to build a "dark room."

You have to seal a space, an area big enough to work in, with materials that can completely block any light from entering. Total darkness. In our world, that has become a rarity. Can't see your hand moving in front of your face darkness.

Darkness, light. But here we are talking of spiritual darkness and spiritual light. Sin, which every person born into Adam's race is guilty of, seperates us from God. We are born dead. Spiritually. We stumble bumble around, looking for God. In a world of other sinners ruled by Satan. It's a hopeless deal.

Spiritual darkness. Spiritual death. Seperation from our creator, and we

are hopelessly lost in that darkness unless He reaches into it and gives us light. We have no resource within us to cause that. Dead things don't shake themselves into life. In spite of Charles Darwin. Dead things don't breathe life into themselves. And that metaphor of darkness is a descriptor of who we were. Dead. Spiritually we were hopelessly separated from God.

But something happened. God reached into the darkness and saved some and brought those who He chose out of darkness and into light. Out of Satan's world and into His. Out of spiritual death and into a vivid personal relationship with Himself.

Peter says; *Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

I want to look at 3 verses that say the same thing Peter is describing here. This coming out of darkness and into the light. Spiritually.

Listen to the apostle John in 1 John 5:19 *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

The distinction there is marvelous. The contrast of the world we came out of and who we are now is bold in this verse. We are of God. We belong to God. Everyone else, the whole world surrounding us "lies in the power of the evil one. Satan controls this world and all who are in it, except; those who belong to God. Them and us.

You know what that makes us, right. If we are in fact distinctly different. Enemy combatants. Hopelessly outnumbered. Encamped right here in Satan's world.

That would be a frightening thought, except for the line, again in the Lord's prayer that 3 year olds can say; *. . . and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil . . .*

Think about being a hopelessly outnumbered enemy combatant in Satan's kingdom . . . without those words. Scary thought if you understand who we are and what John just said about us in 1 John 5:19.

Except Jesus said something important that addresses that.

We are enemy combatants, hopelessly outnumbered in Satan's realm, but Jesus said; ...*17And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. 18Yet not even a hair of your head will perish.*

I'm in Satan's realm, surrounded by enemies who hate me, if I'm distinct from them. The more distinct I become from the world, the more the world will hate me. Yet, every hair that's still left on my head is under God's sovereign care and control. I am off limits from Satan except for what God allows.

What about all of the martyrs. What about the Christians in Revelation that are lined up all day long like sheep to be slaughtered. All under God's sovereign control. Every martyred saint goes out of this world and into the next one, by God's will and sovereign permission, a huge winner.

Not one hair perishes unless He allows it. Take that, Satan.

Next verse about Satan's kingdom and God's kingdom. Acts 26:18 where Paul is explaining how he was called out of this world to King Agrippa. He tells the King what Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus. Jesus said;

I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Me.'

This is exactly what Peter has been telling us. We turned from darkness to light. We came out from under the authority and power of Satan, to God. We received forgiveness of sins and an inheritance given to those who are the sanctified. And like Paul's call, He did that so that He could send us to proclaim the victory to others.

One more that was tremendously helpful to me in putting the pieces of the Bible puzzle together into a big picture. Again, Paul, to the

Colossians;

Chapter 1, vs.13 *He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son,...*

He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son,...It just doesn't get any plainer than that.

Back to verse 9; *so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

We asked 2 questions. How did this happen. We answered that one. God brought us out of Satan's kingdom and adopted us into His family. And the second question is a little harder. OK, it's completely impossible. Fools rush in. Why? Why us? How does election work. Why did we get chosen?

I was just minding my own business being evil and dead and one day God saved me. Why? Why me?

God actually tells us some of the mystery. He says, first of all it didn't have anything to do with you. Who you are. Your particular desirability. Anything you did or didn't do. Your choice. Your decision. God makes that clear. We didn't choose Him. He chose us.

Let me give you a simple analogy. Last week I was in the grocery store to buy some corn.

Oh, apricots. I'm an apricot fanatic. Store bought apricots for the most part, do not get the job done. But in Tonopah, the other choices are usually nil. So I stared at the apricots. There were about 60 of them in a pile. I picked out 4 and put them in one of those little plastic bags that are a challenge to get open.

I'm explaining biblical election with apricots. This is how it works. I sovereignly chose 4 apricots out of the pile. I sanctified those apricots. I selected them and separated them out of the pile they were in and put

them in a bag and carefully placed them in my cart.

I purchased those apricots for my own possession. The lady at the register didn't say "What about all the other apricots? Why didn't you pick them? That's not fair to the other apricots." She doesn't say that because she knows, I have sovereignty over the apricots I selected. It pleased me to pick out the four I picked out.

That about does it. That's what God has told us about His selection process. IF we needed to know more, He would have told us. He tells Moses in Exodus; I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. Period.

That's what He revealed. That's what we know. It's enough! He picks. He snatches who He snatches out of Satan's kingdom and adopts them into His family and showers them with every blessing fathomed and not yet fathomed.

Why me? Why not the people across the street. Actually, truth be known, I think they may actually be prettier and nicer and smarter than me. Why did you pick me and didn't pick them.

That's His business. He is sovereign over every choice. And every explanation that men come up with to try to make that more palatable, ends up stealing sovereignty from God and giving it instead to men who are dead. Don't do that.

But, in fact, Peter does tell us why we were chosen out of this world and showered with unfathomable riches. It's right in this verse. verse 9; *so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

It's the same reason Jesus told Paul on the road to damascus. He told Paul I'm sending you to proclaim my name to the gentiles.

He did it so we could proclaim His glory. The word "proclaim" is interesting. Used only here, and the best comparison is the old english word; to publish.

Remember the old hymn. Oh, Zion Haste. It was based in Isaiah 40:9

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

The writers of the hymn understood that God calls us out of the world so that we can proclaim His name and salvation to others also.

3. Proclaim to every people, tongue, and nation that God, in whom they live and move, is Love; tell how He stooped to save His lost creation, and died on earth that we might live above.

Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace, tidings of Jesus, redemption, and release.

that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

God saved us. He called us out of darkness and into life so that we could proclaim His excellencies to others.

Gary Flood shared an apt analogy just this morning on the telephone with me. He said that it has been noted that when gay people come out of the closet, it frees them in a way to be more fully that.

Difficult analogy because we sorrow for them but the idea crosses over. When we christians come out of the closet and announce to the surrounding world that this is who we are, it frees us to more boldly live as what we've declared we are. Publish glad tidings. Proclaim the excellencies of Him who had delivered us out of this perishing world.

Vs. 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

To finish his praise about all that God has done for us, Peter draws on the minor prophet Hosea and recalls the object lesson God used to tell Israel they were being set aside because of their sin. Remember Hosea and his wife Gomer.

The object lesson of harlotry and children who were a picture of God's judgement on Israel and Judah. They had names that were a play on words to get God's message across. And Peter uses the idea. Hosea 2
23

*“I will sow her for Myself in the land.
I will also have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy,
And I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My
people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’”*

Peter says, In Christ, we are the people who have obtained compassion. We are the people who say, *‘You are my God!’*

And that is true both then and now, but if you study Hosea you will find the conundrum that only God can make happen. He dismisses Israel from being His people for their harlotry. His unfaithful wife is removed. Yet He says the people divorced will again be blessed.

And we believe a day is coming when God will take the bride of Christ, the church, to heaven, and Israel will again be the people that God is dealing with. Punished double for their sins, but yet, God will gloriously save a remnant in the tribulation period and every promise God made to His people Israel will yet come to pass in the millennial reign of Christ.

What a glorious study this has been in Peter's letter to the saints who are aliens in this world. We are aliens and strangers in this world where we no longer belong. We are fish out of water here. We are distinctly different from the citizens of this place.

Last evening as I gazed into the heavens long after dark, I mused on the indefinable feeling of longing to be where I do belong. Longing for all of the things written down to be completed. Longing for all the riches

stored away securely waiting for me to inherit them. Longing to not see in a mirror dimly any longer, but to see face to face.

C. S. Lewis is rare among christian writers because he recognized that same longing and wrote of it often. This fish out of water impatience that has me listening to the news to see if the world has gone up in flames and we are in fact making progress towards home.

I've been praying for *Thy Kingdom Come* so long that now my only heart's desire is to see any little progress that perhaps it's coming soon. Then, we will be aliens and strangers no longer.

The Stone-Cut-Out-Without-Hands will dazzle us with his glorious judgement on His enemies and His kingdom will be set up. The sun will no longer be needed because Habakkuk 2:14 says; "*For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.*"

I'm a fish out of water, here, and that is my longing. I ache for that day to be here. I hope you do too. Meanwhile we are to be about publishing glad tidings. Proclaiming the excellencies of Him who rescued us out of this perishing world.