

III. Believers are God's Chosen People (9-10)

Discussion Questions

- * How are believers described in vs.9 How does that make you feel? How does this challenge you? How should we act based on this verse?
- * What does it mean you once were not His people?

Cross - References

Exodus 19:6 - You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

Teaching Points

1. But - Here is that all important word "but." We do not have to face this doom. We can be from it if we accept Christ as the Messiah. These verses 9-10 apply to all believers including those Peter wrote to and us as well. We have an extremely high position in Christ.

A. Chosen race - We are chosen by God before the foundation of the world. We are a new race, a race not defined by flesh and blood but by our belief in Christ. Since we are citizens of heaven we could be described as a heavenly race. The most important characteristics of our race are not physical ones, but spiritual ones. These spiritual characteristics (fruit of the spirit) go beyond our color and unite all believers from every tribe, tongue, and nation into one family of God.

B. A royal priesthood - Are you a priest? Each of us is a priest. We can come directly into God's presence. We can offer sacrifices to Him, our own lives. We can bring God's message of peace to the world and bring the world's needs to God through prayer.

C. A people of God's own possession. We belong to God. He brought and paid for us. Our actions reflect back on Him. Our character should reflect His. We must let God have His way in us.

D. We are to proclaim His excellence. We are to trumpet God's message to anyone and everyone who will listen.

E. He has called us from darkness into the light. Our lives must now be different. We know the truth. We know what we should do.

F. Before we were not even a people. I take that to mean that Gentiles had no position in God's kingdom. Each nation had their own false gods, their customs and tradition and their own way of rebelling against God. Yet Christ brought together some people from each of these previously estranged and far-flung nations, and molded them (red and yellow, black and white) into a new people, a new group, called Christians. Now, Christians are united as a

people, God's people. "The United Kingdom of God." "WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD. Each of us has received God's mercy, allowing us to be adopted into His great family.

So, we see God's great mercy. We see our high position in Christ. We see how He has completely changed the trajectory of our lives.

Application - How does this make you feel? What effect should this have on our lives? What can you do differently tomorrow based on these verses?

IV. Live a new life for God's Glory. (11-12)

Discussion Questions

- In what ways are we aliens? Where else did we see this in 1 Peter? Why do you think Peter stresses this?
- Do you face this battle between the new man and the old man?
- Do you feel this is a war? Do you want to win? What is your strategy to win?
- Why are we called to be a good testimony to unbelievers?

Cross-References

Galatians 5:19-21 - the acts of the flesh are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fit of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I was you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 John 2:15-17 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Teaching Points

1. Once again Peter here describes believers as aliens / strangers.

This is a reminder that the world is not our home. We are not "earthlings." We are citizens of heaven. We must realize that we are just passing through the earth on a journey toward our permanent home. Therefore, we should not get attached to this world. We should not love it. We should be in the world, but not of the world.

Philippians 3:20 - But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Peter makes an application based on the fact that we are aliens in this world. He says "as aliens ...abstain from fleshly lusts ..." That means since we are not of the world, we should not have the same desires as those who are not of the world. Also, fleshly lusts, like the world around us can only provide temporary satisfaction. Like the flowers of the grass the pleasure gained from these wrong desires will fade

Consider the example of Ammon. He lusted for his half-sister. The passage in 2 Samuel 13 tell us he was in love with Tamar. Through deceit and manipulation, he fulfilled his lustful desire.

After that, he hated Tamar. And though the passage doesn't say it, he probably hated himself finally lead to: disappointment, despair, regret, hate.

3. There is war between our new man and our old man. How can we ensure victory? If we want to win , we may have to take drastic steps to root out sin in our lives. We have to take defensive steps by reading the Bible and putting on spiritual armor. We have to take offensive steps by examining our lives for sinful areas and then mercilessly root it out.

4. Here is another reminder that we are to be a good testimony to the people around us. Our behavior is to be excellent. It is not to be just "good or acceptable" or not bad, but excellent!

Who in the Bible had an excellent testimony?

Daniel and Joseph are two who come to mind. In Daniel's case, it is documented how his enemies strove to find something, anything, bad about his life to accuse him about. And they could not. Imagine a similar investigation into the lives of most political figures. There are probably only a handful of political figures on the planet (if that) who could stand up to that kind of scrutiny without some kind of scandal or corruption being uncovered. Yet, Daniel stood up to the scrutiny to the point where his enemies could only say "He prays too much. He is too faithful to God. Wow, Don't you want to have this kind of excellent testimony before the world? It is achievable. Remember that what God wants us to be holy as He is holy and gives us the resources to achieve victory over sin.

5. What is the motivation for excellent behavior? It isn't to get respect. It isn't to impress other Christians with how spiritual we are. It isn't to get some kind of earthly rewards. It is to reflect God's grace to a lost world so that God will be glorified. And what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.