

THE PRIVILEGES OF GRACE

1 Peter 2:9-10

INTRODUCTION

- One of the most important questions a person can ask themselves is, “Who am I?”
- Most people have an incorrect view of themselves, which results in wrong choices in life
- Only by gaining a true understanding of our identity, can we hope to choose the right path for our lives
- Unbelievers have a false view of themselves, thinking themselves to be good and accepted with God, when they are in fact evil and condemned by God (cf. Revelation 3:17)
- When God in his grace awakens us to our true depraved and condemned state, we are then ready to be saved from our sinful state
- As believers, we too can fail to realise our true identity in Jesus Christ, and miss the blessed fulness of the Christian life, walking in God’s will, and instead fall into defeat, backsliding and worldliness
- The apostle Peter, after his introductory salutation (1:1-2), proceeded in this epistle to describe in detail the glorious spiritual blessings that God has poured out upon believers (1:3-2:10), before giving practical instructions regarding the responsibilities of believers (2:11-4:11)
- It is as if Peter is saying, “Christian, this is who you are in Christ, and now this is how you live for Christ.”

- Rather than simply fill his epistle with a series of commands to believers, Peter sets forth God's glorious purpose for the church, which serves as a powerful motivator to faithful and loving service
- The "but ye" of v.9 serves to contrast with the unbelieving and disobedient of v.8 who stumble on the Rock of Christ as revealed in the word of God
 - ✓ They stumble at his deity
 - ✓ They stumble at his birth of a virgin
 - ✓ They stumble at his sinless life
 - ✓ They stumble at his miracles
 - ✓ They stumble at his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross
 - ✓ They stumble at his resurrection
 - ✓ They stumble at his Second Coming
 - ✓ They stumble at his providence
 - ✓ They stumble at his Lordship
- In these verses we are shown the glorious *position* of the believer, as well as the glorious *purpose* of the believer

I. THE GLORIOUS EXALTATION OF THE CHURCH

- A. This four-fold description of the church is drawn from God's promises given to Israel of their privileged position as his own special people (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6)
 1. Their blessed position under God's favour was conditional upon their obedience and faithfulness to his covenant
 2. Israel failed to do this through their unbelief and disobedience, therefore God in his displeasure has set them aside until they repent and return to him at the end of this age

3. The church now takes the favoured place before God that Israel forfeited
4. Note that the church has not *replaced* Israel, or that God is finished with that nation, but that the church in this dispensation is to God and the world what Israel was meant to be
5. In due time, God will save Israel and use that nation to bless the world (Romans 11:13-16; 11:23-24)

B. A chosen generation

1. As recipients of his grace, God's people are a chosen or elect race (*genos eklekton*) (cf. Isaiah 43:20-21)
2. This has nothing to do with physical race or genetics, but rather *spiritual* race
3. All of us enter this world as children of the devil, children of wrath and children of hell, by virtue of our inheritance of sin from Adam
4. The Jews saw themselves as children of God merely because they were the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, yet Christ showed them that their father was the devil (John 8:41-44)
5. We become the children of God only by faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12-13)
6. It is Christ who chooses us and calls us to his service (John 15:16)

C. A royal priesthood

1. While Israel was called to be a "kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6), the offices of king and priest were never held by the same individual, apart from Melchisedec

2. Jesus Christ is both King and Priest – “he shall be a priest upon his throne” (Zechariah 6:12-13)
3. And those whom he redeems, he makes “kings and priests unto God and his Father” (Revelation 1:5-6; 5:10)
4. As seen in v.5, this priesthood describes the believer’s new relationship to God, brought into personal communion with him through the mediation of Christ
5. *“Ye are to be like Melchisedec, in whom the two offices of priest and king were combined in one person. More than that, “ye” are to be like your Lord, in respect to his royal priesthood. That he should have “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,” seems to be an honour which is far too high for us. It appears to bring us almost too near our Lord, yet it is not so, for Peter wrote, under divine inspiration, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood”*” (Spurgeon)

D. An holy nation

1. “Holy” (*hagios*) describes something set apart unto God, consecrated pure, and separated from all that is unclean
2. The purpose God intended for Israel to be a holy nation unto him (Leviticus 19:2; 20:26; Deuteronomy 7:6; Isaiah 62:12), now becomes the purpose of the church in this age
3. Christ redeems us not merely from sin’s condemnation of us, but from sin altogether; his purpose in salvation is to make sinful people into holy people (Romans 6:1-2; Titus 2:14)
4. Believers are called “saints”, which is from the same Greek word as “holy”

5. The word “nation” (*ethnos*) shows God’s purpose that individual believers be united together in the community of the church
6. The ties that unite believers are far stronger than any genetic, racial or ethnic bonds, as it is a *spiritual*, not physical union in Jesus Christ
7. This church-nation is to be a beacon of light and holiness “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15)
8. Yet even as Israel failed their calling, and began to imitate the idolatrous heathen nations around them, so too many churches are imitating the world in their worship and behaviour

E. A peculiar people

1. This literally means “a people for [God’s] own possession”
2. Believers are purchased unto God by the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28) and therefore belong unto him (1 Corinthians 6:20)
3. Yet this “possession” is not mere ownership as of a slave, but is a *prized* and *treasured* possession to God

II. THE GRAND OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH

A. “That” indicates the purpose of God’s redemption of his people

1. God saves sinners not merely to deliver them from hell and give them a home in heaven

2. His purpose and chief end for us, is the same purpose in all his doings through all eternity – to display his glory

B. To show forth God's praises

1. "Shew forth" (*exaggello*) is to make known, proclaim, advertise
2. "Praises" (*aretas*) means virtues, excellencies, and the supreme and eminent qualities of God
3. God communicates his glory through various means such as his creation, his providence, his redemption, as well as his people
4. As believers, we are bound to employ our entire beings, body, soul and spirit, in our words and deeds, to proclaim the glories of our Redeemer to the world (2 Corinthians 4:6)
5. As Christ's ambassadors, as we show forth his praises, it will bring others also to worship and glorify God (Psalm 40:1-3; Matthew 5:16; Galatians 1:23-24)
6. *Brightness of the Father's glory,
Shall Thy praise unuttered lie?
Fly, my tongue, such guilty silence;
Sing the Lord who came to die.*
(Robert Robinson)

F. Called out of darkness into his marvellous light

1. We are born in darkness, bound in darkness, and in love of darkness
2. Salvation is the light of God penetrating our darkened, evil hearts and bringing us to life and salvation (Colossians 1:13)

3. We are brought not to any light, but to God's marvellous (*thaumastos*), wonderful light
4. Having been delivered from darkness, we are now to walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8)

III. THE GRACIOUS LIBERATION OF THE CHURCH

- A. We were once "not a people", but are now the people of God
 1. Unbelievers are not a people in the sense that they are spiritually dead, estranged from God, without purpose, significance or hope in life, whose final end will be in hell forever, with their names blotted out
 2. In Christ we are now "a people", with eternal life, communion with God, living according to the purpose for which we were created – God's glory (Ephesians 2:11-19)
- B. We were once without mercy, but have now received mercy
 1. All people in a sense receive mercy from God every day by his common grace
 2. But unbelievers remain under sin and God's condemnation, and are excluded from his redeeming grace
 3. His mercy is available to all those who will humbly come to him for it (Luke 18:13)

CONCLUSION

1. Much of modern evangelism has reduced the gospel to nothing more than a "ticket to heaven", which is a gross misrepresentation of what God's gift of salvation really is

2. God not only delivers us from the eternal punishment of hell, but brings us to himself, as his special people, transforming us into his trophies of grace in order that we might display his glory to the world
3. As we grasp the magnitude of God's grace towards us, it should compel us to live for him and not for ourselves
4. Every person is showing forth the praises of someone or something
5. For most people, they proclaim the praises of themselves, their own goodness, self-righteousness (Proverbs 20:6)
6. Whose praises are you showing forth? Your own, or Christ's?
7. How may I show forth my Saviour's praises?
 - ✓ By using every opportunity to speak of his glory before others
 - ✓ By always defending his cause, and vindicating him
 - ✓ By endeavouring to preach the gospel to those who are outside of his grace
 - ✓ By walking in a holy and consistent manner, ensuring that my behaviour is becoming of one who names the name of Jesus Christ