

TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 9)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:9c-10

THEME: The Believer's Priesthood

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Read Passage

I feel a little bit like the captain of the Mayflower

It took them 9 wks to reach Cape Cod; it will have taken us 9 wks to finish this section. Journey for them was difficult, but worth it & I don't know how difficult it's been, but I trust that our journey through this text has been worth it all. I guess one of t/key diffs. is that many died during their journey . . . I think we have kept all of you alive over past 2 months or so.

Here we are, reaching t/golden shore of v. 10 ==>

I. The Church as a Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

Title that comes right out of v. 9 . . .

Place of departure was verse 4 ==>

A. Established in the Living Stone (4)

He is t/living & chosen Cornerstone. He is t/stone that is integral to t/entire building. So, our role as believer-priests is dependent on our relationship w/Him. Our place in t/spiritual temple (v. 5) is dep. on Him. We call in theology our "Union with Christ." Tru believers are in X & He is in them. We are joined to Him. He has passed thru t/veil into t/Holy of Holies & so we have our access to God t/Father thru Him. If it weren't for t/living Stone, our inheritance wouldn't be E.L but E.D.

We continued on thru v. 5 ==>

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5)

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for

a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. Wonderful imagery taken from the O.T.

OT economy, t/priesthood was taken from a certain class (Aaron & t/Levites). NT economy, every Xn is a priest before God (male, female, Jew, Gentile). And every believer-priest stands B4 his/her God ==>

... being built up as a spiritual house (not an earthly Temple)
for a holy priesthood . . . (true of every believer)
to offer up spiritual sacrifices . . . (worship, service, prayer, lives
Rom.12:2)

Main of our journey has been thru vv. 6 and following.

Did some checking. Spent 3 wks. in vv. 4-5. May 14 we hit v. 6. & this will have been our 6th wk. in vv. 6-10 ==>

C. Elected as the People of God (vv. 6-10)

IOW - The CH & Ea. member of t/CH has been chosen by God to be adopted into His family.

Really, t/kernel of that idea comes out of v. 9=>

5. The Character of God's People (9a)

But you are . . .

looks back to ==>

3. The Contrast of Unbelief (7-8a)

But for those who disbelieve: the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner. 8 And: a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

4. The Cause of Unbelief (8b)

They stumble because they are disobedient to the word (to reject t/Gospel), unto which [ends] they were appointed (or predestined).

5. The Character of God's People (9a)

But you are . . . (continues t/thought of v. 7)

- a. #1 - An Elect Race
- b. #2 - A Royal Priesthood
- c. #3 - A Holy Nation
- d. #4 - A People for God's own Possession

4 descriptions followed by 1 purpose. Ea of t/4 consist of a noun & a modifier.

What kind of race are you? An elect or chosen race.

What kind of priesthood are you? A royal P.H.

What kind of nation are you? A Holy nation

What kind of people are you? A people for God's own possession.

Each one of these descriptions come right out of t/OT. 1 of 2 passages:
Exo. 19:6 or Isa. 43:20-21.

1) an ELECT RACE, - ISA. 43

2) A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, - EXO. 19

3) A HOLY NATION, - EXO. 19

4) A PEOPLE FOR [GOD'S OWN] POSSESSION - ISA. 43

The CH as a New Covt. Community has fulfilled these promises which were given to OT Israel. Each one of these is fulfilled in t/CH. Not t/Jewish CH, but One Body made up of Jews & Gentiles. Rem. Peter's audience is mostly Gentile.

- a. Theological Postscript

At this point we encounter all sorts of theological debates over this single issue (What is it?). The relationship between OT Israel & NT CH.

(1) On one extreme ==>

you have t/trad. dispens. who draw a hard line of distinction between them. God has turned away from Israel and we're now in t/CH age, t/age of t/Gentiles, but God will some day turn back to Israel & finish what he once started. Two peoples of God. CH & Israel. Run like parallel lines & never shall t/2 meet. BTW - might wonder what folks in this camp do w/this passage in 1 Peter? ==> "Peter is writing exclusively to Jews." Have to say that!

(2) On the other extreme

you have those w/i t/trad. covt. theol. camp who say that every single OT promise given to Israel is fulfilled in t/CH, t/"spiritual Israel." God is thru w/Israel as a nation & as a people. The fact that they went thru t/holocaust has no biblical significance // regathered as a nation in 1948 . . . Many in this camp believe there won't even be a future revival among t/Jews.

(3) Might wonder where I stand on this

(a) As you might have expected: "Warm & fuzzy" inbetween

I think it is intellectual suicide to try to drive this hard/fast distinction between Israel/CH into t/Bible. There is 1 people of God, not 2. Salv. by grace alone, thru faith alone on t/merit of X alone. When God calls someone out of t/darkness into t/light of that truth, He makes him a member of t/Body of X - t/CH. True for everyone, incl. Jews. Can't get there any other way.

I have actually heard so-called Xn leaders say that t/Jews can get to heaven through t/OT Law. One man, whose name most of you would know, allegedly put an ad in a/TX newspaper declaring this to be true. It's not.

There's only 1 New Covenant // one way to be reconciled w/God. Not based on ethnicity.

In fact, Paul in Rom. 9:6 says that

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

IOW - to be a physical descendent of Abraham doesn't make you a spiritual child of God.

Romans 4:16 - Paul calls Abraham, the man of faith, the father of us all who are justified by faith (Jew and Gentile).

Gal. 3:7 - Those of faith are the real sons of Abraham (that's t/CH / all nations).

Romans 9:8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, [referring to physical descendants of Abraham] but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

Galatians 4:28, Paul writing to Gentiles says, And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

(b) I'm not the last word on this issue

I'm still wrestling thru my understanding of all this and no doubt will continue to tweak my views, so to speak. But at this point in my understanding I believe that many of t/OT promises that were given to Israel find a spiritual fulfillment in t/NT CH. Can't deny that, from our passage in 1 Peter alone.

CH is t/fulfillment of t/spiritual promises given to Israel. 1 CH = 1 People of God, not 2.

Nature of our spiritual baptism into this one CH

1 Corinthians 12:13; For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Nature of the unity of this one CH.

Galatians 3:28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Nature of t/fulness of X - the head of this one CH

Colossians 3:11 . . . there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Nature of t/CH as reflected by t/24 elders of Rev. 5:9

And they *sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

(c) Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:6

i. This is the concern I have with the so-called Messianic Jewish congregations

These are groups of mostly Jews who have embraced JC; yet they practice t/law; they celebrate Jewish feasts and festivals; they call their meeting places synagogues and their leaders Rabbis.

(i) Problem I have w/that is two-fold:

1) A return to t/Law is a return to t/shadows which have their fulfillment in X.

Paul dealt w/this in his letter to the Colossian church. They had a contingent that believed t/OT law was essential to mature Xnty. In writing to these confused believers he says, ==>

Colossians 2:16-17 16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

2) These Messianic groups effectively re-erect t/wall of division that was torn down by X. Eph. 2:14-15 ==> **Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall . . . He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,**

Something else I've noticed, that's the pride that exists among those who ID w/this movt. There's an attitude of superiority, kinda like "We're t/real deal doin' it right." That attitude has resulted in many deceived non-Jewish Xns joining w/these sorts of congregations believing them to be t/ultimate expression of biblical Xnty.

(ii) Yet, if you look at the nature of the church as we've seen it in 1 Peter, what do we find?

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . . But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's own] possession

This is the Church! This is the ultimate expression of God's people!

It isn't based on physical descent from Abraham // any ethnic identity // geographic locale; But on the grace of JC who reigns as king over this spiritual nation.

(d) Has the church replaced Israel?

Wouldn't put it in those terms. Better - t/CH has fulfilled Israel. I don't believe in 2 separate peoples of God // 2 New Covts. Entrance into t/K.D. is same for ethnic Jews as for anyone: Have to come thru X, makes you part of His body, t/CH. Spiritual promises to Israel are fulfilled in t/CH.

That being said, however, I do believe that one day yet future there will be a revival among t/Jews.

Romans 11 seems clear to me that God has a purpose yet for Israel, an upcoming revival.

i. Romans 11

11:2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. . . .

11:4 Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:18 - God's response to Elijah in his thinking that he was t/only true worshiper of YHWH left in t/world.

"I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

11:5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

11:7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; God's sovereignty again! (Sheep shudder) - "call up heaven"

Why were they hardened? Paul tells us in v. 11 ==>

11:11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

Romans 11:25-26 25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; [all Israel that is truly Israel - 9:6-8]

"Certainly we can agree that Romans 9-11 affirms God's continuing concern for ethnic Israel and predicts for the Jewish people a great future time of blessing when many will be joined to the church ('grafted back into their own olive tree,' Rom. 11:24). Peter's statements do not nullify that promise. But 1 Peter 2:4-10 does affirm that God's covenant blessings are presently enjoyed only by those who are in Christ, just as Rom. 9-11 affirms that future enjoyment of covenant blessings will come only by being joined to Christ." [Grudem, 113-14]

To bring it back to 1 Peter ==>

(4) If we just look at the two quotes from Exodus (v. 9)

Royal Priesthood and Holy Nation are exact quotes of Exo. 19:6 in LXX. And again, we have terminology from t/OT that was used of Israel that finds its fulfilled in t/CH.

A fulfillment of what Jesus declared to t/Jews in Matt. 21:43 ==>

" . . . the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.

Same thing in Rev. 5:9-10 ==> where it says that X purchased for God with his blood ==>

. . . men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God . . .

I. The Church as a Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

C. Elected as the People of God (vv. 6-10)

Last week we looked at ==>

6. The Calling of God's People (9c)

. . . who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

a. Note the prepositions:

"Out ($\epsilon\kappa$) of darkness into ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the light." We were called while yet in the dark. How did we see? Was there any light in our souls, a dim sliver? No, it was darkness, complete blackness. That's the state in which we were called to faith in X ("While we were yet sinners Christ died for us").

b. Conversion as a transfer

COL 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

It's a spiritual transfer from one place to another. God took you while you were blind, he took you by t/hand & gave you sight. He picked you up out of t/morass of sin & death & He placed you into t/light of His K.D.

All of this so that you might ==>

"Sleep in on Sunday" // "Not say anything about X because that's not your spiritual gift" //

... SO THAT YOU MIGHT PROCLAIM [HIS] EXCELLENCIES ...

That's the ==>

7. The Commission of God's People (9b)

We call it t/Great Commission. Unfort. it's more often "t/Great Omission!"

a. You are heralds of the excellencies of God

I love that picture. What's a herald? Someone who has t/official capacity & responsibility to declare something for someone else. What are we to declare???

(1) "Excellencies" (*ἀρετὰς*)

Refers to "Moral excellence, virtue." Everywhere you go, whatever you do, you are to proclaim t/excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into light.

b. Something else that's relevant . . . Relates to ==>

... who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Ephesians 5 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth) . . . 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

2 Corinthians 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Really is a manifold application of this that extends even to our worldview as believers. We walk in t/light. Things make sense. We don't live w/a contradictory worldview (by w.v. I mean how you live your life in light of what you believe).

(1) Christianity is inherently logical

We don't have a conflict of worldviews like those who deny X have.

Nothing makes sense apart from a knowledge of God. You can't prove anything apart from him. He is t/author of universal laws of logic and morality. Apart from God there are no universal laws, no abstract universal absolutes.

Apart from Xn theism everything becomes opinion. Convention. Cultural. "Whose to say that marriage is to be between a man and a woman?" (one of each). Whose to say that adultery is wrong? Whose to say that anything is wrong universally speaking?

(a) Even the person who denies absolutes doesn't live that way

He doesn't come to a busy intersection and say, "The may be red, but it's green for me." He uses universal laws of logic and rationality that can't exist apart from God. He embraces universal laws of morality that don't exist apart from God. The atheist gets angry and feels wronged when someone else steals from him. In a naturalistic universe why would that be wrong? If we're just animals, and I'm a stronger animal, why can't I kill you and take what is yours? Happens in t/animal K.D. all t/time.

We know innately that we're not animals.

(b) Romans 1:18-32

Marriage; family; morality; even t/concept of civilization and acting "civilized" is based upon and grounded in Xn theism . . . a Xn worldview.

People bring up t/problem of evil ("How can a good God exist if there's evil in t/world?"). That begs the question. Apart from God there is no evil. Nothing is inherently and universally wrong. Things may be uncomfortable, but not absolutely and universally evil.

If there's no God there is no absolute moral standards and nothing is wrong (including the torture of children, which may be painful, but not morally wrong.). It is morally wrong in a theistic universe

Some have attempted to define universal laws of ethics apart from God by saying that goodness is "that which brings the greatest happiness to the greatest amount of people." That's their standard. Why is that a standard? Who's to say? Cannibalism has been the standard for many cultures.

If morality can be stipulated, then the cannibal can stipulated his own standard.

The very posing of the problem of evil presupposes a theistic universe. God has a good reason for the evil he plans or allows.

The Xn worldview has absolute standards to judge right and wrong, we have standards to live our lives by. All other worldviews do not. That's why they borrow from ours.

(c) What about other religions?

Other religions are not philosophically defensible. They are either internally incoherent or violate human reasoning and experience.

Example, Hinduism assumes that God/Brahman is the impersonal universal soul, the unchanging one from which all things are part. Everything in our normal experience and thinking is illusionary. There are no distinctions, everything is one. Everything is illusion.

(d) Only a Christian worldview can explain life

How did we get here? Evolution? Can't explain abiogenesis! How can you have anything from nothing? If something was always here, how can something be eternal apart from an eternal source? Complexity of our universe demands a designer.

Only a Christian worldview can explain life ==>

(e) Only a Christian worldview can satisfy the great unknown and fear of man: death.

I just recently read an account of a Jewish Oncologist who embraced Xnty through his experience of watching Xns die.

Like Wesley, when asked what differentiates Christians from the rest of mankind "My people die well."

This world isn't the end all. There has to be more than this or it's all a big joke.

Voltaire's final verdict on life was that it was "a bad joke" and on his death bed he proclaimed "bring down the curtain, the farce is done."

... who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light ... so THAT YOU MIGHT PROCLAIM [HIS] EXCELLENCIES ...

8. The Chronology of God's People (10)

Once you were not a people, but now [you are the] people of God; [once you were] those who had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

a. Peter is quoting two passages from Hosea (1:9-10; 2:23)

HOS 1:9-10 ". . . you are not My people and I am not your God. Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And it will come about that, in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."

HOS 2:23 "And I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, 'Thou art my God!'"

(1) What is a direct fulfillment of those two passages?

Once you were not a people, but now [you are the] people of God; [once you were] those who had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (Peter is writing to Gentiles . . .)

Peter here encourages these Gentiles, telling them that they once were not a people, they were of darkness. But they have now received mercy and are God's people. Context of their suffering and hope.

8. The Chronology of God's People (10)

I say "Chronology" because this passage reminds us of where we have come.

Like the Psalmist who declared in Psalm 40:2 ==>

He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay;
And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.

Once you were not a people, but now [you are the] people of God...

Not only were you not a people of God; you weren't a people at all! Rem. v. 9 "A Chosen Race." A new race; a third race.

(2) The parallel structure of this verse:

"Once you were not a people" stands in opposition to "you had not received mercy."

To not receive mercy is to receive what? Justice! What's justice? Getting what you deserve. In God's eyes what do we deserve?

"Soul that sins will what?" "Wages of sin is what?"

Mercy is not getting what you deserve.

To be receive mercy is to be what? People of God. Parallel idea here.

I think the great reformer John Knox had this passage in mind when he wrote to his brethren in Scotland in 1557 before leaving there for exile in Geneva

Let no day slip or want some comfort received from the mouth of God. Open your ears, and he will speak even pleasant things to your heart. Close not your eyes, but diligently let them behold what portion of substance is left to you within your Father's testament. Let your tongues learn to praise the gracious goodness of him, whose mere mercy has called you from darkness to life.

So we are finished with verse 10

This actually closes the first major section of 1 Peter, a section begun in v. 3 of chapter 1. The message of mercy that began there closes here.

Next section is 2:11 - 4:11, social conduct of Xns. (How Xn conduct is defined by our response to our adversaries).

What a wonderful passage of Scripture this is!

In these 7 vv. we see that nearly all of the blessings promised to Israel in t/OT have been bestowed on t/CH.

The dwelling place of God no longer is the Temple in Jer.; The CH made up of Xns from every tribe, people, and lang. now serves as a spiritual temple.

The priesthood is no longer restricted to t/Levitical class, but all believers everywhere exists as a Royal P.H. serving in a spiritual Temple.

We are the true chosen race; the true holy nation, existing to proclaim the excellencies of our God.