

Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light

A Reflection on 1 Peter 2:9-10 and God's Marvelous Light

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If you have your Bible with you, please go ahead and turn to 1 Peter chapter 2, and we will begin in verse 9 this evening. As an intro, I'd like to bring out the importance of biblical perspective, describing some defining points on what that looks like. Here's just some of them to put it into context before we go into our text. Perspective refers to how we view life, situations, but above all, God. We look through the lens of Scripture, of course, with faith. It's a way of understanding and how we can interpret the world based on God's truth and values rather than solely relying on human experience or worldly viewpoints. A biblical perspective encourages believers to align their thoughts, actions, and interpretation with God's Word and His will.

We saw from last time the importance of the New Testament church. We went from individual believer to understanding the New Testament church in the Lord Jesus Christ and how we are built up, starting with the foundation, the chief cornerstone, which is Christ our Lord. Then we saw the pieces built upon the chief cornerstone, which we are as believers, called living stones. We understood the importance of the meaning of that structure, that we are all together built up in the Lord Jesus Christ, Him as a solid foundation. We saw some similarities of words from the Old Testament and into the New Testament, some similarities and differences, in the sense of not only fulfilling the Old Testament but even the greater thing that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, that the Old Testament they didn't get to see, and they certainly didn't see pre-resurrection.

We touched on some roles and responsibilities as a Christian. We saw how God saw Jesus as precious. So, the perspective from God looking to Jesus, and then we saw how we as believers ought to look at Jesus, same word, "precious." We're in agreement. Now we're going to see greater aspects of our roles and responsibilities as believers as we're going to examine from going back to looking from God's perspective and looking at us as believers. From God looking at us, I'm telling you, there's a lot to unpack this evening of how He sees us as believers. So, open your eyes and your attention, your eyes of faith to believe the truth that God calls you, Christian. The immense gravity behind what our roles and responsibilities are. The goal is to understand the depths of our relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit toward us believers.

Let's dive into verse 9, shall we? Verse 9 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." My title of the sermon is that last part,

“Out of Darkness into His Marvelous Light.” This is the thing, the big picture. What is going on as believers? What has happened in our lives? A distinct moment in our life when we came out of darkness. It was God who called us out into His marvelous light.

What are the things that He’s called us into? We’re going to see in this passage. Let’s just take the word “a chosen generation.” This is a great privilege of a Christian, that we are chosen. God chose us. We didn’t choose Him. He chose us. We are that generation on this side of the post-resurrection. The key reason that we fail as Christians is that we fail to grasp the significance fully of this word “chosen generation.” We fail to properly appreciate our claims and responsibilities when we are not sufficiently moved by the privileges we have as Christians.

I’m just giving a high view right now. I’m going to dive deeper. I want to look at the word “praises.” I brought it up a little bit, but I’m going to bring it up even more tonight. Just lifting at a very high view, in the original language of Greek, instead of praises, it reads “excellencies,” or it can also be rendered “perfections.” By the word “perfections,” of course, is applied to God and Him alone. Amen. Our earthly qualities, such as kings and priests, which I’m going to get to, though bearing the same name as Jesus as High Priest, as Him as King, are mere shadows of the radiant perfections and glories of His character, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We give Him the due honor as brothers and sisters in Christ. We indeed show the true expression employed in the Old Testament. By the way, Isaiah 43:21 says this, and Peter had this in mind: “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.”

Another passage to think about, not so much that Peter brings out here, but I just saw this text in Isaiah, and I thought, “Wow, it brings it again in more detail.” It says this: “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.” It all comes back to what God is supplying to us. Amen. Just like He applied to Israel, He applies all of these things to us as believers. His lovingkindness is without end. It continues, Old Testament, New Testament. The character of God does not change. He is lovingkindness always.

He is lovingkindness always, and it describes His heart. The heart of God is His lovingkindness towards those who are His own. He loves us as believers. Do you grasp that on a daily basis? Because lovingkindness is God’s kindness and steadfast love, continual love for His children, especially evident and condescending to meet our needs. Has He not met your needs up to this point? You can trust that He will continue to provide your needs because the lovingkindness, His character, does not change. Therefore, the needs, He knows every single bit of it. In Scripture, God shows us His lovingkindness in saving His children from their enemies, delivering them from their troubles. Just bring out some Old Testament here. You find this in Exodus 15:13, Jeremiah 31:3, Ezra 7:28, Psalm 6:4, and then His lovingkindness comforts us, Psalm 119:76, redeems us from sin, Psalm 25:7, Psalm 51:1, and assures us of His promises, Deuteronomy 7:9. God’s lovingkindness is abundant, Numbers 14:18, great in extent, Psalm 33:5, and everlasting in Jeremiah 33:11. He is full of goodness, Psalm 69:16. God’s lovingkindness is steadfast love. Loving actions on our behalf know no bounds. We cannot contain God. The world cannot contain Him. He is by Himself altogether His own. There was no one like Him. Amen. No one like Him.

Even that is admitted, it is to be observed that the expression here does not merely mean the audible praise, what's coming out of our lips, but that our whole lives should, in a far deeper sense than the audible, be the manifestation of what the Apostle here calls the excellencies of God. Do you praise Him with His excellencies? That's what He deserves with our lives. Note the words in verse 9, in which the writer describes all God's mercies to His people, making them a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own possession. All that is done for one specific purpose: that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness. That is to say, the very aim of all God's gracious manifestations of Himself is that the men who apprehend them should go forth into the world and show Him for what He is.

We start with the end in mind. What is the end goal? We're going to be praising Him forever and ever. We have the privilege of practicing that here on this earth. That's one of the greatest privileges, Christian. At the end of our lives, how well did we represent Him? That's a question to ask oneself.

Going more into the explanation of verse 9, God's grace, rather than human choice, above everything else, is the ultimate explanation for why some people come to faith and others do not. God has elected. He has chosen some to be His people. Therefore, what? No one can boast. What does Ephesians 2:8-9 say? "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." We cannot boast. It's given to us. Everything's been given to us. God's grace favored on us, unmerited. Amen.

Let's go a little bit more into the Christian privilege, more on this: a chosen generation. Chosen by who? Divine sovereignty, by what? Divine love. This right, granted by God to individuals or, in this context, as a church, is extended through Jesus Christ. These privileges are not earned through human merit, as I mentioned, but are expressions of God's grace and His kindness. Again, lovingkindness. They come with responsibilities, and we will go into that, particularly in how we serve God and others. By the way, we serve like Jesus did well on earth. We look at Jesus, follow His example. We have not of our own but owe to Him. We're not reigning yet with Jesus. We will upon His second coming. As you remember, the apostles misunderstood that they thought the first coming was a second coming, but that's not that period right now, not in the church age. We have certain privileges, but not all, such as rule yet to come.

The great clarity that we ought to have, I'm going to explain it more when we come to the dignity of a Christian. Let me just show you some similar language of God's perspective toward Israel. I want to bring out some more Old Testament because I want to show you where we came from, where we arrived. It didn't just appear out of nowhere, but there are references after references of the Old Testament. Let's look. You don't have to turn there, but Exodus 19:5 says this, the first clause, the introduction, the identity of Israel, identifying Israel. This is the way He does it: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." Exodus 19:6 says, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Now comes the purpose clause. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Then we look at verse 9, and you see similarities: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." There is a treasure here, people, same idea. This clause introduces the identity of believers. This is who we are in Christ. Then the purpose clause:

“that ye may proclaim the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Identity is extremely important to God. Order is important to God. Can’t say that enough. Order is important. Then the purpose of our identity comes out from our identity because an unhealthy identity creates unwise actions, and unwise actions reinforce an unhealthy identity. Do we not have that problem today in the world? Redefining identity, it does not change, period, to a believer. Amen. We are secure in our identity, and our purposes, our actions, flow out from our identity.

Let’s go into the Christian’s dignity, and that’s the word “royal priesthood.” We’re dignified people. This is referencing to Israel again as a nation in Exodus 19:5-6. Now we see it through the New Testament as a New Testament church. These are the two highest dignities, by the way: one of priest and one of king. As a Christian, we have both. We see this in Melchizedek, back in Genesis 14. He’s represented as a priesthood that transcends the Aaronic priesthood. Christ is the ultimate priest in the order of Melchizedek. We are granted this great privilege as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to share in His royal priesthood.

Let’s break out those two words: royal and priesthood. Royal: as Christians, we are part of God’s kingdom. We are called to exercise a measure of authority based on Scripture, based on His Word, reflecting the reign of Christ. That’s a lot of words there. I’m going to dive into it. This involves living a life that reflects God’s character, namely through Christlikeness, and then standing against all types of evil. We have a privilege to dispel evil. We are the light of the world. Think about that. We are the light of the world. We can expose evil because we know how it felt like. We experienced it. Amen. But now we don’t. Some of the things that we do, as we are praising God, as we are calling people with the gospel out of darkness, we have this great privilege of being of royalty. What is so distinctive about royalty? It’s the way royalty speaks. You ever notice how royalty speaks? It is much different than how non-royal people speak. You know how you speak royalty right here? You speak His Word. You speak for the King, the King of kings and Lord of lords. This is precious words. This is kingly words. Let’s not treat this lightly. Amen. We come from a royal line that we get to share by the Lord Jesus Christ.

What about priesthood? This aspect emphasizes the privileges and the responsibility of believers to offer spiritual sacrifices, which I did mention in the previous verse. What were those? Well, here again, it’s emphasized: the praises. I emphasized back then the worship and the service to God and to others. This is a privilege of a priest. It involves interceding for others by how? Praying for them. We should constantly remind ourselves to pray because we are intercessors. He is interceding for us all the time. Amen. The Lord Jesus. We have the privilege, the awesome privilege, to intercede for others. We get to represent them before God. What do we declare as a priest? I shared it earlier, but the excellencies of God, His perfection. Don’t minimize that. Remind yourself what His excellencies are, His character that doesn’t change in this world that always changes and will constantly change. Share something that is concrete, that will not move, because in the soul, we want something secure. Should we not then emphasize this over and over and over again, His immutableness, one of His perfections, His characteristics? Because we always change, don’t we? But He doesn’t. Let’s share to others and declare that as a praise.

What else can we do? Namely, sharing the good news of salvation with the world. Sharing the gospel is a vital part of our praise. We should do it constantly and it involves what? Leading

others to be reconciled with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have that awesome privilege. We might not know who will be saved, but we have a great responsibility sharing the truths of Scripture. We are called to be ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, to reconcile to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not just a passive thing. I can't say that enough. It's not a passive thing to be just recipients of God's grace that we're receiving it. What else is God's grace? It's an active participation in His mission. He's doing His mission work through us as believers. What an awesome privilege we have that we get to intercede for people.

At the present time, the church is a royal priesthood united with the ultimate royal priest, Jesus Christ. I'm going to explain a little bit in greater explanation of what I shared earlier, which is this: a royal priesthood is not only a priesthood that belongs to and serves the King but also a priesthood that exercises rule. On that point, exercising rule, this will ultimately be fulfilled in Christ's future kingdom. Let me just read from Revelation 5:10: "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." In that passage, it's referring to His second coming. Oftentimes, I've seen Christians act like they're kings now and they rule people now. That is not how Jesus wants us to serve and to live. Amen. We must be very clear on that.

Another quality that we're going to find in a Christian is this word "holy nation." Look down with me at the words "holy nation." We already talked about holiness, and that was in 1 Peter 1:16. God calls us to holiness because He is holy. We are to be holy. It's non-negotiable. We are going to be holy. We are going to be separated and more into His usefulness. We were before not useful. Now we are useful. That's what that holiness means. We are useful to God. What more are we to be identified as? As a holy nation here. How much more is this relationship with God? I'm going to bring out some of the connections first. We saw it in Exodus 19:5-6, where God called Israel as a nation to be set apart. That's what that word "holy nation" means. Now as Christ's New Testament church, we are also a holy nation of royal priests.

Matthew 16:18 says this, I'll repeat it as I did before: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The church is built on Christ. Look at Ephesians 5:25-27, verse 27 says this: "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The purity of the church is extremely important to Christ Himself, without blemish, without wrinkle, is an impossible task, namely for an undershepherd, but we don't depend upon ourselves. We depend on the great Shepherd instructing us, showing to you through us first, and then here as I'm preaching it to you, the importance of those words. It's His church. He wants it pure, and I am called, and you are called, to make it pure. That's what it means to be a holy nation in the New Testament church context.

Let's go a little bit more into the next part in verse 9, and that's "a peculiar people." The Greek word used here refers to something obtained, kept safe, or belonging to someone. Christians are peculiar because they are redeemed by Christ's blood and belong to God, called to reflect His light to the world. Acts 20:28 says this: "To feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Christ's own blood. Very weighty, isn't it? When you start thinking about the importance of the New Testament church, Christ is all over it. Amen. Our greater understanding of the privileges God's grace has granted and continues to grant us, the more discerning you will be in our obedience. You'll be more obedient when you really live up to

these things. You will be more willing to do the things that He has asked you to do. You must be solid in your identity before purpose. Amen.

Verse 10 reads this: “Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” This is amazing. It’s essentially saying that we, before, did not receive His mercy in the Old Testament sense, but now as Gentile believers, we have received His mercy. We can see this in Hosea 1:6-10 and 2:23. I’m just going to read verse 23 of chapter 2 of Hosea: “And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”

Romans 9:23-26 says this, which speaks of God declaring, “You are my people.” What I said in Hosea, you are my people here. Paul says this in Romans: “And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As He saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.” That’s fulfillment of God’s Word. Amen. Gentiles are included in God’s family through faith in Jesus Christ.

God has eternal mercy on His elect church by forgiving their sins and eliminating their judgment. We see this in Romans 9:15: “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.” Titus 3:5: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” In the Old Testament, the prophet Hosea promised that Israel, though remaining outside of God’s blessing for a long period of time, would eventually come under God’s mercy. God’s dealing with Israel was a pattern for how He was going to deal with us as Gentiles in the New Testament church, the new covenant. I don’t have time to go into the text, but you can see it in Ephesians 2:4-13.

Let’s go into more of the words here in 1 Peter 2:10. Look down with me: “Which in time past were not a people.” We didn’t belong to God but were far from Him. I just want to lift out this verse in Ephesians 2:4: “which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” Paul was saying here in Ephesians 2, like he did in Romans, this is amazing that God, His words, talking about mercy. By the way, in Ephesians 2:4 says He’s rich in mercy. It’s the idea that there’s enough mercy available, doesn’t end.

Remember that Peter is writing, let me just backtrack all the way to the very beginning of chapter 1, where he was specifically writing to the diaspora. What is the diaspora? If you recall, this is what it is: believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who were scattered or dispersed throughout the world, who, by mind you, were living as strangers in a foreign land but were chosen by God and were destined to be with Him in glory. That was going to happen. They were scattered. They were confused. What’s going on? Everything’s falling apart. Peter tells them, “No, which in time past were not a people.” They might have focused on that: “I’m not His people. I’m scattered abroad. Things are falling apart. Why is my life crumbling? Why is everything taken away from me? Am I not a people?” One might ask in all honesty.

They knew they weren't rejecting the Messiah. They knew they were not blaspheming God. No matter what, in the context that you may feel, the identity is crucial because wherever you may be, I'm speaking now to you here in this room, wherever you may be, as long as your identity is secure, you know that you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He's chosen you, and that He has called you by these things, and you are reflecting His character in Christlikeness. Those are great privileges that are not just given to anybody, again, a chosen generation.

You can be secure in that second part: "but are now the people of God." God was and is doing a new thing in calling out a people and extending His mercy to them. He's doing that now in this room. Possibly, He's doing it out in the world. He is extending His mercy. May we have that sense of urgency that He may use you as an extension of His mercy to go and reach the lost where they may be found. That is one way.

God's mercy, how does that look like? It looks like compassion. It looks like lovingkindness. It looks like withholding deserved punishment and offering forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ. This demonstration of God's character, an affection of His goodness, His love, and His grace. Again, mercy is not earned, but it's freely given. Just one of His attributes that we as believers are privileged to experience and extend to others. May we live that way. May you who are in this room, if you're not a believer, sense that mercy extended to you, that you will be called by God's grace and by His mercy the people of God.

Let's pray. Father, thank You so much for Your Word, so weighty. Father, what privileges, what dignities, what qualities we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, we ask for Your help. Strengthen us, Lord, in these areas. Help us to be mindful of these things and to take greater responsibilities in our roles and our identity as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. As we do so, Father, we will thank You for all the things, Lord, that You will provide to us. We know, Lord, that all things, all good things, come from above. We know that, Lord. We trust You, Lord, that You will provide to us for our needs, that You will provide to us what's good for us ultimately. Help us to endure any sort of afflictions here on this earth, any sense of us being pulled to the left or to the right, but help us always come back to being centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to be secure in His identity in this way, Lord, and what I have preached tonight. Father, I do pray for those that are lost. I pray that You would continue to extend Your mercy to them, Father, that they would sense Your goodness, Your kindness, Your mercy, and Your grace, Lord, that that is who You are. You don't change. I pray, Father, that they would see You as such. I pray, Father, that You will, by Your grace and Your mercy, draw them to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Because it is in Your doing, Lord, and it's to Your glory and to Your praise that any of us come out from the darkness into Your marvelous light. Thank You so much, Father, for everything that You do in this church and in all the churches, Lord, that are ministering in this way. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.