

 **Life Group Questions - 1 Peter 2:9-10****UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE**

1. *Main Idea of the Passage:* In light of the kind of people God has made us to be, we ought to declare his excellencies to the world.

Outline

1. Who we are (9a)
 1. Chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, a people for God's own possession
2. What our purpose is (9b)
 1. To proclaim his excellencies
 2. He called us out of darkness into his marvelous light
3. Who we were (10)
 1. Once were not a people (but now are)
 2. Once had not received mercy (but now have)

Interpretation Help

1. ***The Old Testament background of this passage:*** "V 9 claims for Christian believers the promises of Ex. 19:5-6 and Is. 43:20-21 for which Paul argues in Rom. 9. People implies physical descent and may refer to the relationship brought about by the new birth. The word from which priesthood is derived is never used in the NT to describe the Christian ministry, but rather the task of all Christian believers (cf. Rev. 1:6). Throughout the OT, kings and priests were separate individuals. Only Melchizedek and the Messiah combined both offices. Saul sinned when he tried to discharge both functions (1 Sa. 13:5-15). In Christ the Christian can be both. A holy nation is a people called to reflect the character of the God who has called them (1:16). A people belonging to God (i.e. special) uses the imagery of the eastern king, who kept a special treasure chamber apart from his government exchequer. This was for his own use, and the idea is first found in Ex. 19:5 and picked up in Tit. 2:14 by Paul. Praises is a difficult word to translate and the RV's 'excellencies' is probably the nearest to the original. The Christian will find it natural and spontaneous to respond in this way to God and other people once it is understood that all these blessings flow from the free grace and mercy of God (10). Peter quotes Ho. 1:8-2:1 and 2:23 to bring this point home" (*IVP New Bible Commentary*).
2. ***Has the Church replaced Israel?*** Someone might read these verses that ascribe to the church the various identities of Israel, and conclude that God has moved on from Israel to focus on the church. But it would be a mistake, based on these verses, to say that the church has *replaced* Israel. The New Testament regularly refers to Israel in a way that is distinct from Gentile Christians. It would also be a mistake, however, to see a radical dichotomy between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. God has made Jews and Gentiles into one community in Christ (Eph. 2:13-16; Rom. ch. 11). All of God's promises — made in the Old Testament and New Testament — are fulfilled in *Christ*, and all who have faith in Jesus are united in Christ, and therefore receive God's promises through Christ. The church is accurately called the "New Israel" (Gal. 6:16), since the church is united with Old Covenant saints and receives promises of the Old Testament through Christ.

Gospel Centrality

1. These verses show the transformation of the gospel: God called us out of darkness into light (cf. 1 Jn 1:5-10).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Warming Up

1. When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone, or invited them to church? How did it go – what went well, and what didn't go so well?

Staying on the Line of Scripture

1. Peter's verses are a composite and amplification of Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 43:20-21; and Hosea 2:23. (Note that in the Greek translation of the OT, Isaiah's word for "praises" is the same word as Peter's "excellencies.")
 1. Read the three OT verses that Peter is alluding to as a group, and explore the context of those verses. How does the context help us understand what Peter is saying better? How might appreciating these three OT passages affect your approach to following Jesus?

Letting the Text Shape our Framework

1. Which of the four titles in 1 Peter 2:9 easily resonates with you? Is there one that seems foreign to you? Why? How might you integrate these concepts into how you view yourself as a Christian?
2. How might these titles change your approach to life in general?
3. How would you state the opposites of these titles? How does that reflect the identity of unbelievers? How might seeing people in that way grow your compassion, and inspire you to share the gospel with them?

Traveling Through the Cross

1. The biblical imagery of darkness and light comprise a "gospel reversal". Jesus, who is the light, came into this dark world in order for those who are in darkness to be called into the light (John 3:19; 12:36).
 1. Do you usually think of your life before you put your faith in Christ as a time of "darkness"? Why or why not?
 2. Do you tend to think of your life as a Christian as now being in the light? Why or why not?
 3. How would being more cognizant of the darkness/light theme affect how you follow Jesus? What might you apply from John 1:5-10 to live this out?

Applying This Passage to our Lives

1. God's excellencies
 1. What are some ways you are tempted to see God as not excellent? How does this demotivate you in sharing the gospel with others?
 2. What are some excellencies of God that should really resonate with the unbelievers around you? How might you capitalize on those aspects as entry points for gospel conversations with them?
2. Darkness to light
 1. What is your story of coming out of darkness into the light of Christ? How can you use your personal testimony to share Christ with others?
 2. What darkness still exists in your life? Do you ever feel like that disqualifies you from sharing the gospel – are you worried about appearing like a hypocrite? How does the biblical concept of repentance distinguish Christians from hypocrites?