

1 Peter 2:9-10

The believer is Christ's special collection as described in verse 9 "... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." This could be translated *God's own treasured possession*.

"He excavated you from the pit of sin and death . . . and He fashioned you uniquely to fit into His prized collection of the redeemed, called the living church." [Michael Bentley]

The Treasure Described

1. *But you are a chosen race*

Peter again highlights the redemption of the believer who owes his salvation to the covenant election of God's grace. You're not random, you're chosen.

Israel is still God's chosen people. They are uniquely God's covenant nation awaiting the goodness of God which will lead them to repentance, *"that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written"* (**Romans 11:25-26 and Zechariah chapter 12**).

We are His chosen race. The word for "race" in this phrase is from a word that refers to people who belong to a common ancestor, they share a common origin. We have been born again, into the family of God, having received Jesus as our Living Lord. (**John 1:12**)

The gospel has created a new race, one race, made up of people from every tongue, tribe, social and economic standing and cultural variety. God has chosen the un-alike and made them into one new family. The gospel is the only way to explain the assortment of people gathered in a room, worshipping together . . . the glory of God is displayed." [Juan Sanchez] Our new family name is Christian. **Acts 11:26** informs us that believers were first call Christians at Antioch. It was a derogatory term for those following a crucified man claiming to be the "Christos," the Messiah.

2. *We're a royal priesthood*

"The Jewish believers would have found this expression puzzling. And they would have puzzled over the offices of Jesus Christ as both kingly and priestly offices. In Israel, the offices of priest and king were always kept separate." [J. Allen Blair] The Scriptures give us that Jesus Christ's priesthood was derived, according to the Book of **Hebrews** (chapters 5 & 6) not from Aaron, but from the superior order of Melchizedek who preceded Aaron. In **Psalms 110:4** the Scripture states it this way, *"The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."* It is God that recognizes Jesus Christ as high priest and not Christ recognizing Himself.

John the Apostle wrote in the Book of Revelation that we, the redeemed church, will be *"priests of God . . . and will reign with Christ for a thousand years"* (**Revelation 20:6**).

3. *A holy nation*

The word translated "nation" is "ethnos" in the original language; we get our word "ethnic" from this Greek word. It is a word that refers to a community of people held together by the same laws, customs and mutual interests.

The word translated "holy" is "hagios" which means separated unto God. More inelegantly, it simply means *different*. Peter is effectively saying, "As a nation of believers separated unto God, believers happen to be a different from the nations around you."

The early Christians to whom Peter is writing would have openly violated many of cultural norms of their generation. They viewed marriage differently; the role of parenting differently; humility was valued, unlike the culture who viewed it as a weakness. Alvin J. Schmidt in his book *How Christianity Changed the World* quotes Seneca, the brilliant tutor to several of the Caesars, who lived during the time of the Apostles and defended infanticide by writing, *"We drown children who at birth are weak and abnormal."*

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Clement from Alexandria wrote that the Roman government and its citizens were known for saving and protecting young birds and other animals while lacking any moral regard about abandoning or aborting their own children. “*In A.D. 379 church leaders publically condemned the practice of selling aborted babies to the manufacturers of beauty cream.*” [Alvin J. Schmidt]

4. A people for God’s own possession

The King James translation of this phrase is, “*we are a peculiar people*” The word “*peculiar*” in Old English, originally meant to be uniquely possessed by another. So we could translate that part of verse 9 this way: We are a people of God’s private, unique possession. We’re His special treasure, on display.

We are a treasure Jesus Christ was willing to die for. He didn’t purchase us with a lot of money, or the right connections; remember Peter wrote earlier in this letter, “*you were not redeemed (i.e. you weren’t purchased) with perishable things like silver or gold . . . but with the precious blood . . . of Christ*” (1Peter 1:18).

The Treasure on Display

What are we going to do about it? Peter answers that question with a purpose statement; the latter part of verse 9, “*so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” Paul wrote we are “*rescued . . . from the domain of darkness, and transferred . . . to the kingdom of His beloved Son*” (Colossians 1:13). “*Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*” (2 Timothy 1:10).

Peter writes here, we delight and desire to advertise the “*excellencies of Him . . .*” We are to talk about Him, brag about Him, and we are to exalt His glory. The word here for “*excellencies*” is informative. This is a word which refers not only to God’s virtues, but to His ability to do heroic deeds.

We’re to reveal to the world around us the ability of our living Lord to do heroic deeds:

- “*Oh God, you have taught me from my youth, and I still declare your wondrous deeds*” (Psalm 71:17)
- “*Let me tell you of all God’s wonders*” (Psalm 9:1)

1. The Scripture reminds us that God has miraculously included us (Vs. 10)

Peter points out for us to remember who we once were, and that deepens our gratitude for who we are now. “*For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ* (2 Corinthians 4:6) *For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord* (Ephesians 5:8). And so we are “*giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light*” (Colossians 1:12). “*He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” We are living advertisements to His heroic deeds of grace and the gospel.

2. The Scripture reminds us that God has miraculously pardoned us (Vs. 10)

We were under judgement, our verdict: hopeless. But then God called us out of hopelessness and into the mercy of God. Mercy is that which rescues us from all that we deserve.

Application:

As “*a chosen race*” all of those identities that we used to define ourselves have been laid aside. How should this affect the way we “minister and worship” inside and outside of the church?

Spend time looking for ways you can proclaim the gospel this week. If you feel ill equipped, then determine to find some training and help to sharpen your witness.