

## A PECULIAR PEOPLE

### Introduction:

- I. Our text for this morning is **1 Pet. 2:9**. Our lesson will be entitled **A Peculiar People**. Do you like to be called peculiar? As Christians we are peculiar. We are to be different from the average person of the world. **Our behavior, our thinking, our values, our character should be such that we are viewed as an aberration by the kind of society in which we live.** We should be considered a little strange or a little odd because our ways are so different from the ways of the world. The problem, however, is that there is a natural tendency, I think, to want to be like the majority. And we sometimes, even as the people of God, digress into that kind thinking (**1 Sam. 8:1-20**). Now, again, we make this same mistake today as members of the body of Christ. It's sad, but true. We sometimes find ourselves wanting to be like the world. But by the inspiration of the scriptures, we are told to **BE DIFFERENT**. Don't be like the world. Paul said, "**And be not conformed to this world...**" To conform is to act in agreement with or to go along with prevailing customs. Paul said don't do that. **BE DIFFERENT** from the world. We must make up our minds to be different. And if we aren't different; if we instead conform to this world and live our lives like the majority, we shall go the way of the majority. Let's allow Jesus to tell us what that way is (**Matt. 7:13, 14**). This being the case we should rejoice in our peculiarity. We should be happy that we are different.
  
- II. Now, the fact is, whether we like it or not, if we have really been converted, we are different. There are things that we have, blessings we possess, that are indeed peculiar unto us. There are some things, in other words, that can be said of us which cannot be said of any other group of people. We find four such things in our text this morning (**1 Pet. 2:9**). And I want you to understand this morning that these are descriptive terms that only apply to us, i.e., those who are Christians. In the rest of our time, then, let's take a look at each of these four things.

### Lesson:

#### I. A Chosen Generation:

The N.A.S. says, "**...you are a chosen race.**" This indicates to me that we are all of the same stock. The physical Israelites were all of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh; we as Christians are all of the seed of Abraham according to promise. And as the Jews were one people, one race, and one generation; so are we. The color of our skin, the language we speak, the personal backgrounds we have are all insignificant. **We are one in Christ. We are all heading towards the same promise land. We**

are all citizens of the same kingdom and children of the same family. We are a chosen generation. This ladies and gentlemen, can't be said of anyone else but us, and that makes us a peculiar people. And may I say to you that this whole idea of being chosen by God is a very exciting proposition. We have been selected by the mighty hand of Yahweh. We have been elected by the most high God, to be His special people, and that's why we are called a chosen generation.

Now let's say something about being chosen by God. Just who is it that makes up this chosen generation? Not all good people (**Acts 10:1-6**). Not all religious people (**Acts 26:1-5, 11**). Not all sincere people (**Acts 26:9, 10; 23:1**). Not all believers (**Matt. 7:21; Jas. 2:19-26**). Well then, just who are the chosen people of God? Some say they are those who have been arbitrarily selected by God, completely apart from their own actions. They are those, in other words, who have been predestinated without choice. But there are two things implied by that hypothesis that are false:

**1. Some are unconditionally lost** - Calvinism emphasizes election, but where you have election you also have rejection on the same basis. **If some are predestinated to be saved apart from their own actions, then others are predestinated to be lost on the same basis.** Folks, that's not the kind of God we serve. God has the right to elect and reject whoever He wants to, and in fact God does elect and reject people today. But His electing process and rejecting process is fair, and it is in keeping with the good character which is descriptive of Him in the Bible. God does not condemn anyone unconditionally (**2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17; Acts 10:24, 35**).

**2. Some are unconditionally saved** - This too is a false conclusion. No one is saved unconditionally. There is something for man to do (**Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12**). Man must obey the gospel. The gospel is the means by which God chooses people today (**1 Thess. 1:1-5; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14**). No man becomes a part of the chosen generation apart from the gospel. That gospel includes all that God requires of man as revealed in the word (**Hearing, Believing, Repenting, Confessing, and being Baptized**). Those who comply with God's plan are added to the church (**Acts 2:47**). Who are the chosen people of God then? The people of God are those who have obeyed the gospel and have been added to the church. If that includes you, you are a part of the chosen generation for by the gospel you have sought and you have found God (**Psa. 24:1-6**).

## II. A Royal Priesthood:

Let me ask a question: how many people in the world can stake a rightful claim on being a royal priest of God? The answer, of course, is not one!

This is a privilege reserved for those in Christ, and, we ought to appreciate it. By, through, and in Christ we have a position of dignity. We are not only a priesthood, we are, Peter says, a royal priesthood; and that points to the high and honorable place we now occupy in heavenly places. We have, as faithful Christians, dominion over the powers of darkness, for our sins have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. We are conquerors over the lust of the flesh which held us in captivity for so long, because we have crucified the flesh and the lust thereof, and now we, not Satan, have control of our lives for we are God's royal priesthood. And understand please that this is a position held by each one of us in Christ. In times past priesthood was a privilege afforded to but a few, but now it is an honor which may be claimed by every Christian. We don't need any other human being to intervene between us and God, for we all stand in a personal relationship with God, and as priest we have free access to His throne (**Heb. 10:19-22**).

Now, let me suggest that being a priest is not just a privilege; being a priest is a responsibility as well. Please note that priest do something. They have priestly duties that must be attended to. The primary work of the priest is to offer up sacrifices unto God. Now, in the Old Testament, this was not something that the priest did occasionally; they did it perpetually. The fire of the brazen altar (altar of burnt-offering) was to never go out. It burned continuously because the priests were ever at work (**Lev. 6:8-13**). The priests were busy weren't they? Yes, the office of a priest was an exalted position. It would ensure recognition and eminence to those who occupied it. But it wasn't all fun and games. There was work to do, duties to fulfill, and obligations to be met; and there was this on going business of offering sacrifices - burnt offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, meat offerings, etc., so that the fire of the altar would never go out. Now listen: we all are now priest, and we must be about our priestly duties (**1 Pet. 2:5; Rom. 15:14-16** - The word minister here is from a Greek word that referred to service in a public office, and it is applied to the service rendered by Levitical priest at the altar [Heb. 10:11]). Paul was God's priest, and the work he did with the Gentiles was a part of offering sacrifices to God. Such is the case with us. Everything we do in service to God is just a part of our duty as priest offering up sacrifices to God and these sacrifices are a part of what causes us to be a peculiar people. Let me give you just a few examples:

#### **A) Sacrifices of giving.**

We live in a society that says take, take, take. But as God's priest we have learned the art of giving. Why? Because we have a Savior who has taught us the great truth that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And what is it that we give?

1. We give ourselves (2 Cor. 8:5; Rom. 12:1).
2. We give financially (2 Cor. 9:6; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).
3. We give our time (Col. 4:1-5).

#### **B) Sacrifices of praise.**

And we do this on a regular basis like the Levitical priest before us. We praise God when things are going good. When we prosper we don't say we're lucky, we say we're blessed. We praise God. And we praise God when things go bad (**Acts 16:16-26**). Certainly this behavior was considered to be aberrant to others in the jail house, but this is the way God's priest act. We offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and we do it with the fruit of our lips (**Heb.13:15**). You see, as royal priest we have hearts that are full of praise towards God. And when one has a heart full of praise, the mouth will instinctively express it (**Psa. 51:10-15; 145:1, 2; 138:1, 2; Acts 2:47**).

#### **C) Sacrifice of prayer.**

In the Old Testament the priest offered sacrifices of incense (**Ex. 30:1-8**). Now incense offered as a sacrifice symbolized the offering of prayer. David once said, "**Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee**" (**Psa. 141:2**). Also notice **Rev. 5:7, 8; 8:1-3**. So then, we, as God's royal priesthood, should be constantly offering up prayer to our God as a sweet sacrifice (**1 Thess. 5:17; Heb. 5:7**). If there is one area of priestly duty that is most neglected, it is the offering up of prayer. we need to pray. And prayer is something that again is peculiar to us. Only God's priest can pray (**Eph. 1:3; Jn. 9:31, etc.**). Let's be about our business as God's royal priesthood. It is one of the things that sets us apart.

### **III. A Holy Nation:**

This language was first used in reference to physical Israel. They were God's first holy (separated) nation. Their sanctification, though, was based on their faithfulness to God (**Ex. 19:3-6**). We know, however, that Israel failed. They forsook God and turned to idols. As a result their standing as a holy nation was taken from them. Jesus said to the unfaithful Jews of His day, "**...The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof**" (**Matt. 21:43**). Now, Peter, by inspiration, applied the words of Exodus 19 to the church. We are, therefore, the nation that the kingdom of God was given to. We are now God's holy nation. But listen: the requirement is the same as always. We must obey God! It is obedience to the divine will of God that sets us apart, and more than anything else makes us a peculiar people. **It is indeed sad when folks can't tell a child of God from a child of the Devil.**

But that is what happens when we stop obeying God. If we are holy, it will be manifested by proper living. We will live pure before God, bringing forth fruit of holiness. We will strive to live commendable lives that are beyond reproach. **A man was being slandered by others. "Never mind," he replied; " I will live so that no one will believe them."** We always stop people from gossiping about us and spreading lies and rumors, but we can live so that the rumors won't be believable (**Tit. 2:7, 8; Psa. 39:1**). **Daniel was a man that lived above reproach. In Daniel 1:8** we learn that Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself before God. But what we find with Daniel is that he not only purposed this, he performed it (**Dan. 6:1-4**). We too should be able to pass such scrutiny. But to do so we must be consistent. We must abide in Christ and be steadfast in our service rendered to God. This was a key in Daniel's success (**Dan. 6:16**). To Darius Daniel was peculiar. He was different than the rest. And the thing that made him different was his on going service rendered to God. If we are to be a holy nation, we must act like it.

#### **IV. A Purchased People:**

Again, the King James version says we are a peculiar people, but that is not a good translation. The New American Standard says, "**A people for God's own possession.**" That is certainly better than the K.J.V., but it is not quite good enough. The Greek word literal means "**a purchased possession.**" We aren't just a possession, we are a purchased possession. We have been purchased by God, and that's what makes us peculiar. What passage comes to mind when you think of being purchased by God? I bet I know. **Acts 20:28 - "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."** So then, we have been bought, and our cost was nothing less than the blood of Christ. **Generally speaking, one can tell the value of something by what it cost. This should say something about our worth in the eyes of our Lord, for He was willing to shed His blood to purchase us.** We couldn't be bought with silver and gold. It took nothing less than the precious blood of the unspotted lamb (**1 Pet. 1:18, 19**). Now we belong to God. It is frequently true that the value of a thing lies in the fact that some one has possessed it. In any museum we find quite ordinary things - clothes, books, furniture, etc. - which are valuable only because they were once possessed by some great person. Such is the case with us. We are all very ordinary except for this one fact - we are possessed by God. We now belong to Him. We are His special treasure and that makes us peculiar.

#### **Conclusion:**

Yes we are different. Don't ever be ashamed of it. Rejoice in it. Praise God that you are a part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. **Walk worthy of your vocation so that you can show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.** Remember, we are in the world, but we are not of the world, so let's not act like it. **Let's be a peculiar people.**