

1 Peter 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Analysis

Peter applies four Old Testament titles for Israel directly to the church, demonstrating the New Covenant community as God's true people. The Greek *genos eklekton* (chosen race/generation) echoes Isaiah 43:20-21, while *basileion hierateuma* (royal priesthood) quotes Exodus 19:6, affirming believers' privileged access to God without human mediators—a revolutionary claim abolishing the Levitical priesthood's exclusive role. The phrase "holy nation" (*ethnos hagion*) and "peculiar people" (*laos eis peripoiēsin*, literally "a people for God's own possession") from Exodus 19:5-6 establish the church as God's treasured possession among all peoples. This identity carries responsibility: believers exist not for self-congratulation but to "show forth the praises" (*exangeilēte tas aretas*, proclaim the excellencies) of God who called them from darkness to light, a missionary purpose extending salvation's blessings to the nations.

Historical Context

Written to predominantly Gentile Christians in Asia Minor (c. AD 62-64), this verse radically redefines covenant identity. First-century Jews understood these titles as exclusively theirs by physical descent from Abraham. Peter's application to Gentile believers would have been controversial, asserting that covenant promises transfer to the multinational church united in Christ, not ethnic Israel rejecting their

Messiah. This theological shift, rooted in Jesus's teaching and the Jerusalem Council's decisions (Acts 15), established Christianity as the fulfillment of Israel's calling rather than a competing religion.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does your identity as part of a 'royal priesthood' change your understanding of prayer and direct access to God?
2. In what practical ways are you 'showing forth the praises' of God who called you from darkness to light in your daily life and relationships?

Interlinear Text

Ὑμεῖς	δὲ	γένος	ἐκλεκτόν	βασίλειον	ἱεράτευμα	ἔθνος
ye	But	generation	are a chosen	a royal	priesthood	nation
G5210	G1161	G1085	G1588	G934	G2406	G1484
ἄγιον	λαὸς	εἰς	περιποίησιν	ὅπως	τὰς	ἀρετὰς
an holy	people	a peculiar	G4047	that	G3588	the praises
G40	G2992	G1519		G3704		G703
ἐξαγγείλητε	τοῦ	ἐκ	σκότους	ὑμᾶς	καλέσαντος	
ye should shew forth	G3588	G1537	G4655	G5209	G2564	
εἰς	τὸ	θαυμαστὸν	αὐτοῦ	φῶς·		
a peculiar	G3588	marvellous	G846	light		
G1519		G2298		G5457		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 7:6 (Holy): For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Revelation 1:6 (Parallel theme): And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:10 (Parallel theme): And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Isaiah 61:6 (Parallel theme): But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

2 Timothy 1:9 (Holy): Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Deuteronomy 14:2 (Holy): For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

Titus 2:14 (Parallel theme): Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1 Peter 2:5 (Holy): Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 10:15 (Light): Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Isaiah 26:2 (Parallel theme): Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.