

# 1 Peter 2:9

by John Gill

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*John Gill's sermon on 1 Peter 2:9 emphasizes the identity and responsibilities of believers as a chosen generation, royal priesthood, and holy nation called to reflect God's glory.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 43:20, 1 Peter 2:9

**Topics:** "Spiritual Identity", "Chosen People"

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## Description

John Gill expounds on 1 Peter 2:9, emphasizing that believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people. He explains that this identity is rooted in God's sovereign choice and grace, highlighting the spiritual kinship believers share with God and Christ. Gill illustrates how this calling from darkness into marvelous light obligates Christians to proclaim God's virtues and praises. He draws parallels to the Israelites, noting that just as they were chosen and set apart, so too are Christians called to live in holiness and righteousness. Ultimately, this sermon encourages believers to recognize their privileged status and responsibilities as God's chosen people.

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## Transcript

Ver. 9. But ye are a chosen generation,... Or "kindred"; the phrase is to be seen in the Septuagint, on Isa 43:20, to which, and the following verse, the apostle refers here, and in another part of this text. The allusion is throughout to the people of Israel in general, who, in an external way, were all that is here said; but was only true in a spiritual sense of such as were chosen and called among the Jews: and who were a "generation or kindred"; being regenerate, or through abundant mercy begotten, and of an incorruptible seed born again; and were akin to God, he being their Father, and they his children by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their new birth; and also akin to Christ, he being their head, husband, Father, and brother, and they his members, spouse, children, and brethren; and to the saints, being of the same household and family in heaven and in earth; having the same Father, Lord, Spirit, faith, baptism, and they all brethren: and they were a "chosen" generation or kindred; being famous, and in high esteem with God, and accounted by him for a generation; he having chosen them above all kindreds, tongues, people, and nations, and that from all eternity; and of his own sovereign good will and pleasure; and not on account of their faith, holiness, and good works; and to special benefits, to the relation and kindred they are in, to grace here, and glory hereafter; to regeneration and sanctification, and to salvation and eternal life; just as Israel, as a nation, were chosen above all others, because of the love of God to them, and for no other reason, to many external privileges and favours, which others did not enjoy: now the apostle mentions this character first, because God's eternal election is the source and spring of all spiritual

blessings, which provides and secures them, and according to which they are bestowed, and with which they are inseparably connected:

a royal priesthood; referring to Ex 19:6, where the Israelites are called a "kingdom of priests"; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, kings, priests; see Re 1:6 a character which one of the Jewish commentators says {y} shall return to the Jews *abl dytel*, "in time to come"; and well agrees with all the people of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are all of them kings, through their relation to Christ; and at the present time have a kingdom which cannot be moved, or taken away from them; being not only brought into the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and having a right to all the privileges and immunities of it, but have also the kingdom of grace set up within them, or grace, as a reigning principle, implanted in them; which lies not in anything external, but in righteousness and true holiness, in inward peace, and spiritual joy; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world; and the riches of kings, being possessed of the riches of grace now, and entitled to the riches of glory in another world; they live like kings, they wear royal apparel, the robe of Christ's righteousness; they sit at the king's table, and feed on royal dainties; and are attended on as kings, angels being their life guards, and ministering spirits to them; and hereafter they shall reign with Christ on earth, and that for the space of a thousand years, and, after that, for ever: being raised up from a low estate, to inherit the crown of glory, to wear the crown of life and righteousness, and possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of which they are now heirs: and they are "priests", as well as kings; being made so by Christ, and through his priestly office; are anointed with the Holy Ghost, and sanctified by his grace, and allowed to draw near to God, and offer up by Christ their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and are enabled and assisted to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, and their bodies also, and even their lives when called to it; the allusion is to the kingdom and priesthood being formerly together, and which met in Christ, Zec 6:13 and in his people. The Jews were wont to call the priestly dignity and office *hnhk rtk*, "the crown of the priesthood" {z}:

an holy nation; referring to the same place in Ex 19:6 where the Israelites are so called, being separated by God from other nations, and legally and externally sanctified by him; as all the true Israel of God are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father, in eternal election, to real and perfect holiness; and are sanctified or cleansed from sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; have principles of holiness wrought in them, from whence they live holy lives and conversations:

a peculiar people; as the Israelites are called a "peculiar treasure", Ex 19:5 to which the reference is: God's elect are a peculiar people, to whom he bears a peculiar love; they are chosen by him to be a special people above all others, and have peculiar blessings bestowed on them, and peculiar care is taken of them; they are the Lord's, *hlgo*, his treasure, his jewels, his portion and inheritance, and therefore he will preserve and save them; they are a people for acquisition, purchase, and possession, as the words may be rendered; whom God has obtained, procured, and purchased for himself, with the precious blood of his Son; hence the Syriac version renders them, *aqyrp avnk*, "a redeemed company": the same with the church God has purchased with his blood, Ac 20:28 and the purchased possession, Eph 1:14 and which are redeemed and purified to be, and appear to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit 2:14 the end of all which grace being bestowed upon them in election, redemption, and regeneration, is,

that ye should show forth the praises of him; that is, God, who has chosen them into a spiritual kindred and relation, made them kings and priests, sanctified them by his Spirit, and redeemed them by his Son, as a peculiar people; all which laid them under obligation to show forth with their lips, and in their lives and

conversations, his "virtues": we read, "praises"; and so the Syriac version; that is, the power, wisdom, goodness, love, grace, and mercy of God, and the commendations of them, displayed in the above instances: the apostle seems to have his eye on Isa 43:21, where the Septuagint use the same word for "praise", as here: next follows a periphrasis of God, and in it an argument, or reason for speaking of his virtues, and showing forth his praise:

who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which is to be understood, not of an external call by the ministry of the word only; for many are called in this sense, who are not chosen, redeemed, and sanctified; but of an internal, special, powerful, holy, and heavenly calling, by the Spirit and grace of God: and this is, "out of darkness"; out of the darkness of the law, under the former dispensation, which was as night, in comparison of the Gospel day; and out of that darkness which the Jews were particularly in, in and about the coming of Christ, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the spirituality of the law; having lost all right notions of the Messiah, and the true sense of the Scriptures, and were carried away with the traditions of the elders, and led by blind guides, the Scribes and Pharisees; out of this darkness, as well as what is common to men, in a state of unregeneracy, having no sight of themselves, their sin, and misery, nor knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, and of salvation by him, and of the work of the Spirit upon the heart, they were called,

into his marvellous light: by which they saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness, their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and astonishing it was to them, that they who were born blind, and were brought up in darkness, and were darkness itself, should be made light in the Lord; and the objects they saw were amazing to them; everything in a spiritual way was marvellous in their eyes; especially the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and also the wonderful things out of the law, or doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the surprising love and grace of God, in the whole, and in the several parts of their salvation: it was with them, as if a child, from the moment of its birth, was shut up in a dungeon, where there was not the least crevice to let in the least degree of light, and should continue here till at years of maturity, and then be brought out at once, at noonday, the sun shining in its full strength and glory, when that particularly, and all objects about him, must strike him with wonder and surprise. The Syriac version renders it, "his most excellent light"; the apostle seems to refer to the form of praise and thanksgiving used by the Jews, at the time of the passover; who say {a},

"we are bound to confess, to praise, to glorify, &c. him who hath done for our fathers, and for us, all these wonders; he hath brought us out of bondage to liberty; from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day,

lwdg rwal hlypamw, "and out of darkness into great light"; and from subjection unto redemption."

This was also part of their morning prayer {b};

"I confess before thee, O my God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast brought me out of darkness into light."

And it is to be observed, that the third Sefira, or number, in the Jewish Cabalistic tree, which answers to the third Person in the Trinity, among other names, is called, "marvellous light" {c}.

{y} Baal Hatturim in loc. {z} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13. Tzeror Hammot, fol. 78. 3. {a} Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 5. Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 23. Maimon. Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. {b} T. Hieros. Beracot, c. 4. fol. 7. 1. {c} Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 8.

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