

"The People of God"
1 Peter 2:9-10
Parker 872 B
Bill Parker

Welcome to our program. Today I'm going to be preaching from the book of first Peter chapter two. The title of the message is "The People of God." What I want to deal with is who are the people of God? Am I one of those people? Are you one of those people? Well we shouldn't have any trouble seeing that if we'll stick to the Scriptures, but I'm going to basically be going with verses nine and ten of first Peter chapter 2 where you have the identification of the people of God but I want to deal with the scriptures that lead up to that.

You know, the Bible makes it clear. God's word makes it clear from the very beginning that there are only two types of people that live on this earth, have ever lived, live now, or ever will live until the Lord comes back. That's the people of the world and the people of God. Another way of identifying them is sinners lost in their sins and sinners saved by the grace of God. One of the main identifications of those people, whichever category you're in, is dealt with from the very beginning. I mention it all the time because it's so foundational.

Let's look back at Cain and Abel. Here's Cain a sinner who's seeking salvation and blessing from God based on his works. That's the world. And then here's Abel who brings the lamb, the blood of the lamb which typifies and pictures and prophecies of the eternal lamb, the real lamb: the Lord Jesus Christ. Abel is a sinner seeking salvation by the grace of God in Christ, that's the people of God.

But let's look back at 1 Peter 2:1. The first thing we learn here about the people of God is that they are sinners saved by the grace of God. They're saved, they're justified before a holy God. They're righteous in Christ. They're not condemned, but they're still sinners in and of themselves. Peter writes here, *"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking."* Do you mean the people of God are still having to deal with such sins within themselves? Yes, because the people of God are in a warfare within themselves. It's called the warfare of the spirit and the flesh and we have to fight sin within our selves. The people of God have three great enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil and how do we fight those? By the grace of God in Christ. So he tells them: put off all these things, fight these things. You know, the sinful human nature, that fallen human nature, is still within us. Now we have the Spirit of God. Some call that a spiritual nature and that's fine. What we have, we have been born again by the Spirit of God. We have the Spirit of God indwelling us. Christ indwelling us by his Spirit and by his word. We have eyes to see now, ears to hear, hearts and minds to understand. We know Christ and we are to fight sin in this realm. And then he says in verse two, *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby:"* The people of God have a hunger for the word of God. Desire the

sincere, the true, the honest word of God that we may grow. If you are spiritually alive you're growing spiritually. Growing in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people say growing in holiness, growing in perfection, that's not so. But we grow in our knowledge. We grow in our appreciate and value of Christ. He says in verse three, *"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."* In other words the people of God are the people to whom God has been gracious and they've tasted that grace and it's sweet to their taste because they know that they're sinners who need salvation.

He says in verse four, *"To whom coming."* In other words, coming to Christ is not just a one-time thing to the people of God. It's a continual life thing. We come to him initially as we're brought by the Holy Spirit in the new birth, the power God unto salvation. But we keep coming to him. We come to him all the time. *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone,"* a resurrected Christ. He's called a "living stone" here. He is the foundation stone of the church, he's the chief cornerstone of the church and he died on the cross to put away the sins of the people of God. He was buried and rose again the third day. He is a living stone. He gives life. Life comes from him; all life: spiritual life, eternal life. The Bible says that sin brings death but righteousness brings life. Well how is sin going to be dealt with? In Christ on the cross. He was made sin. He came under the penalty and all the consequences of sin. He bore our iniquities. He bore our griefs and our sorrows for the people of God. And he put away sin, he drank damnation dry. He died on that cross. Now here he's going to make a distinction between the people of God and the people of the world. The people of God, God having been gracious to us, we come to Christ. We love Christ and we rest in him for all salvation, for all forgiveness, for all righteousness, for all life and glory. But this living stone, Christ, was *"disallowed indeed of men."* Man by nature, the people of the world, they disallow him. In other words, they don't have any love for him or any trust in him but chosen of God. Christ is the chosen of God and he's precious it says.

He says, *"Ye also, as lively stones"* which means living stones. That's the people of God who've been justified in Christ, who have been born again by the spirit. They live spiritually. He says, you're *"built up a spiritual house."* That's the church. The people of God are members of his church. Christ told his disciples, *"...upon this rock I will build my church"* and he says, *"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (the rock of himself) And he says, *"an holy priesthood."* That holy means that we are marked out and separated, sanctified and the priesthood, hold onto that thought, I will come back to that. He says, *"to offer up spiritual"* sacrifices. What are those spiritual sacrifices? Thanksgiving, praise, worship, service. Not to be saved, but because we already are saved. We're not trying to earn our way into God's favor by our works, by our sacrifices. If we are, then that is not the people of God. That's the people of the world. That's like Cain. Cain was trying to earn his way into God's favor by his works. We can't do that. *"By deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."* We cannot be saved by works of righteousness which we have done. The only way we can be saved is by the grace of God through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus

Christ. And the spiritual sacrifices he said, *"acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."* You see without Christ nothing about us or nothing we offer unto God is acceptable. We're accepted in the beloved. That's the people of God.

He says in verse six, *"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion..."* Sion there is a picture, a symbol, an emblem of the church. *"A chief cornerstone,"* that's what Christ is. He's the chief cornerstone. Everything is fitted into the building, the spiritual building, and measured by him: the most important stone. And he says, *"a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believe on him shall not be confounded."* All who believe on Christ shall not be ashamed or confused. You see in Christ we have nothing to be ashamed of. He's the Lord of glory. He's the perfect son of God. He's the one who satisfied the justice of God for the sins of the people of God, imputed, charged to him. He is the righteousness of the people of God. They stand before God, clothed in his righteousness, imputed, charged to them and therefore they have nothing to be ashamed of. Our sins are all taken away. And then he says, *"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious:"* That's the people of God. Is Christ precious to you? The Christ of this book. He says, *"but unto them which be disobedient,"* which means unbelief, *"the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."* Appointed: marked out for that. And what it's saying here is those who do not believe in and rest in Christ for all salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, life, and glory. When his message, when the message of grace is preached they stumble over it. They trip over it because they're trying to be saved by their works. The Bible tells us that Christ is the light and men by nature hate that light because their deeds were evil. You see here is a person who's seeking salvation based on his works and he thinks he's earned it. He thinks he's done enough but the Gospel comes along and says, oh no, all your works are filthy rags in the sight of God. All your works are dead works, even evil, iniquity in the sight of God and if he is not convicted by the Holy Spirit, he's only going to trip over that message. He's going to disallow Christ and his truth and he's only going to carry out what he's already been appointed to and that's eternal damnation.

But look at verse nine. Here's where we come to. Here is the summation, *"But ye"* (the people of God) *"are,"* he gives us several descriptions of the people of God.

The people of God are...

1. ***"ye are a chosen generation."*** What is it to be chosen? It is the elect of God. The people of God are the elect of God. Now I know people talk about election today. Most people deny election, God's sovereign electing grace. But, my friend, if God had not chosen a generation here, and I love that term generation, I will deal with that in just a moment. If God had not elected a people there would be no people of God. There would be no salvation. Man left to himself will not choose God. So who are the elect of God? Well people today

say well that's Israel of old. No, the people of God, the elect of God, the chosen generation are all who have been described up here who have tasted that the Lord is gracious unto whom Christ is precious, who rest in him and believe in him. That's the spiritual Israel of God. They are those whom Paul described in Galatians 6:14 when he says, *"But God forbid that I should glory,"* (that I should boast or have confidence) *"save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."* That's the Israel of God. Peter, over in 1 Peter 1, when he began this epistle, in verse one - listen to his words. He says, *"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge" (that's the foreordination) "of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:..."* It's the election of grace. There's no such thing as an election where God looks down through a telescope of time and foresees who would choose him. That would be election based on works. It's the election of grace, Paul wrote in Romans chapter eleven. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: he said, *"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." And he says, "you're chosen generation."* That means this is the creation of God and how did this generation come about? Well they come about through the death of Christ. In other words, their whole election is based upon what Christ would accomplish, and in our day has accomplished in time. Before the foundation of the world God chose a people and gave them to Christ. Put all the responsibility upon him of their salvation. Their eternal well-being rests upon Christ and that's why he had to come into this world and take upon himself the likeness of human flesh without sin. That's why he had to walk as their representative and substitute, as God-man. Even unto obedience, unto the cross to save them from their sins.

2. And then he says secondly, he says, you're **"a royal priesthood."** The Bible states that in other places especially in the book of Revelation as a kingdom of priests or kings in priest. Royal, because we represent the royal authority of the King of Kings. We're ambassadors of Christ. A priesthood. Back in the old covenant you know what the priesthood represented. In the tabernacle in the temple you had the high priest. The high priest was the only one, he was the head priest, and he was the only one who could go into the holy of holies where the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat were one time a year on the day of atonement with the blood of the lamb. That high priest is a picture of Christ, the high priest of his people: of the people of God. He is the one and only high priest for ever and ever. He's not a priest after the order of Aaron and Levi. That was a typical, earthly, fleshly, and temporary priesthood. That priesthood had a beginning and had an end but the priesthood of Christ is for ever and ever. It's called after the order of Melchizedek. A man whom we had no idea who his father or mother was, his lineage or his pedigree. He is a type of Christ. He typifies the perfect high priest. Christ Jesus is the priest who enters into the holy of all, the holiest of all, the very presence of God for his people and he paved the

way for the people of God to enter into the holiest by his blood. The book of Hebrews chapter 10 speaks of that in such plain and beautiful language. Let me just read that to you where he talks about how Christ as the high priest of his people, entered in. He says in Hebrews 10:19... and this is all based upon what he said about Christ's one offering. He says, *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,"* You see we enter the holy presence of God not by our works, not by our own worthiness, but by the blood of Jesus. Worthy is the lamb. He says, *"By a new and living way,"* this living stone. You see, that old covenant priesthood, that was a dead way but the blood of bulls and goats could never put away sin. It takes the blood of the son of God incarnate, God in human flesh to do that. His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people, his generation the people of God from their sins. His name shall be called Emmanuel which being interpreted is God with us. And he says, *"By a new and living way, which he (Christ) hath consecrated for us,"* *Christ did it as our representative and as our substitute, "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;"* In other words, here's what Christ did for the people of God: He represented them before a holy God. He substituted himself in their place having their sins charged, imputed to him and he gave them a righteousness which enables them, as a royal priesthood, to enter into the holiest by his blood. By his merits.

3. Back over in 1 Peter 2:9, here's the third thing. He says, the people of God are **"an holy nation."** You know when the people of God look at themselves they do not see holiness in the way of moral purity. Why would Paul or Peter have to tell holy people who were holy in themselves with moral purity, to lay aside malice and guile and hypocrisy and envies and evil speaking? If the people of God here on this earth now, that's what we're talking about, if we were morally pure within ourselves, we wouldn't have any fight with these sins. We wouldn't have a warfare of the flesh and the spirit so what does he mean *"an holy nation?"* That word holy, what does it mean? It means set apart. It means sanctified. It means separated and he says you're *"an holy nation."* Now let me make this point: As the people of God stand in Christ based on his righteousness imputed we're as holy as we'll ever be. But in ourselves here on this earth we're still sinners but we're separated. Separated from the world.

How are we separated?

- a. We are separated in electing grace: God chose us before the foundation of the world.
- b. We're separated in redeeming grace: Christ died for our sins and put them away and established righteousness for us. We're redeemed. We found a ransom. We have a mediator and then thirdly,
- c. we're separated in regenerating grace. The people of God are those who are called out of the world by the preaching of the Gospel unto Christ. Paul said in Romans 1:16, he said, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;"* In other words, if you believe the gospel, the true gospel; if you rest in Christ it's because the Holy Spirit has made that word preached the power of God unto salvation. You

didn't come of your own free will. You didn't come but your own goodness. You came by the power of God and he says, *"it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek . For therein (in that gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."* Well, what is the righteousness of God? Over in book of Romans chapter 10 Paul wrote of his brethren in the flesh, the Jews in the flesh. And he said, I pray, my heart's desire and prayer for them is that they be saved. They're lost you see, they don't know the way. They think they know the way. Their way is the way of salvation by works but that's to be lost. That's the wrong way. That's the way of death. But he said my hearts desire and prayer to Israel is that they be saved. He said, I'll bear them record, they have a zeal of God, they're religious. They try to keep the laws of the old covenant and those traditions of men. They're religious and they're sincere, but *"they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* You see as long as you go about trying to establish your own righteousness before God, what does that tell you? You're not one of the people of God. You haven't given evidence of that yet. That's the world.

He says in Romans 10:4, *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."* Now that's that holy nation. That's those who have been separated out. That's those who've been set apart by God. It's a spiritual nation. This is not an earthly nation that occupies some point of geography on this earth. They are all over the world. God has a people out of every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation. The elect of grace. A remnant according to the election of grace. But they've been separated out, set apart, by the preaching of the gospel. You see, separation is not based on what we wear, what we eat, or what we don't eat. It's based upon the gospel, the good news. Is good news to you or is it something you reject?

4. Now, here's the next thing: he says, the people of God are, ***"a peculiar people;"*** That word peculiar doesn't mean weird. Even though some of them might be weird, that's not the issue. Peculiar there, many of you may have a concordance in your Bibles and you'll see the word purchased. Oh, that's so important. Who are the people of God? They are the blood bought people. Blood bought sinners. Bought and paid for, ransomed, redeemed by the blood of Christ. That's the issue of the blood bought people. Christ paid the ransom price for all their sins and he redeemed them by his precious blood. They're bought with a price. They are not their own. 1 Peter 1:18...listen to this. He says, *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed (bought back) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;"* It wasn't those things of the world, those things of religion, those things of ceremony, those things of the works of sinners. *"But (you were bought) with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* The sinless substitute hanging on that cross for the sins of the people of God charged to him. And he says, *"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,*

Who buy him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." Looking to God. You see they are a purchased people, bought with the blood of Christ.

And he says in verse nine, *"that you should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* That's the people of God. They have been called out of darkness and into his marvelous light by the preaching of the gospel. They've been born again by the Spirit. As they were ruined by the fall, sinners saved by the grace of God, they were redeemed by the blood and they're regenerated by the spirit and being regenerated and called by the Spirit of God to do what? To show forth the praises of Christ. Not to boast of their own works. Not to brag about their experiences and their dreams and their visions. Not to point men into themselves but to point sinners to Christ, to glorify him, to praise him, to honor him. He must increase; we must decrease. That's the people of God.