

# Chosen

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

1 Peter 2:9-10, ESV

One of my favorite lines from **Fiddler on the Roof** is when Tevya turns to God after discovering yet one more disappointment and says, “Lord, I know we are God’s chosen people, but sometime couldn’t you choose someone else?” As Peter pauses in his discussion on suffering as a Christian, he delineates our standing with God over against our struggle and suffering that comes from being truly un-worldly. Peter writes to Christians who have the question, “When Lord, when?” on their lips. Living counter to culture puts us continually at odds with the world. While the world chooses against us, God chooses for us. Our hope is not that the world will change for it will always be against those who do not conform to its standards and ways (cf. Romans 12). Since the world will not change, Peter reminds us of God’s endgame—to make us completely his through and through. He uses four expressions to describe what God is doing to make us fit for forever life.

First, Peter points out that we are God’s select family or chosen kind. God chooses to bring us into his family as he elects to make us his kind of people. While Jews and Greeks see themselves as the world’s elite, God chooses not by way of blood, race or ideology but by way of the heart. His word defines the kind of heart, life and soul his people must possess in order to be selected into his family—to be born of God. The shift moves away from external parameters normally associated with greatness in terms of status for Peter sees brokenness as the beginning of the Christian life—perhaps echoing Christ’s words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” While the world may control our now, it does not control our tomorrow—this is God’s domain and he carefully selects his kind according to his word because he has the final say.

Second, we are being made into a palace of priests. We dine at the Lord’s table sitting in full table fellowship with him as his personal priests. The phrase may also be rendered as “priests who are like kings”. We will live in luxury only God can afford as we continually acknowledge his worthiness as our Lord and our God. Yet, the focus is not on what God gives but on the God who gives. We can count on God to deliver to his beloved even though times may now be grim. God loves us and he will not forget us. The one whose eye is on the sparrow will remember us just as Christ promised (Matthew 6:19-34).

Third, we are a nation holy to God. Thus, God has removed us from ordinary service and dedicated us solely to doing his will. We are not ordinary because we are somehow special but because he has specially chosen and dedicated us to his personal service. Our special status does not come from our giftedness but from his gift to us—it is his doing through what he does in us through his word living in us. When his will becomes alive in our lives, then we truly become the people of God—people called by God to God for all time.

Finally, we are a people possessed by God. *“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine”* (Exodus 19:5). Possession here carries with it the connotation of preservation. God does not domineer our lives but seeks to preserve, protect and treasure us. We are dear to God. While this gives no cause for haughtiness, it is cause for comfort and security in a world bent on taking these away from us. God calls us to excellence—to live as people of life and light. His mercy and grace moves to shape our lives for an eternity filled with his mercy. Who can ask for anything better?

*Steve Davis*