

God's Grand Plan for His People (Part 2)

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[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning and open them to 1 Peter chapter 2.

! 1 Peter chapter 2, we have been looking at a section of this chapter started last Sunday where wonderful truths are identified for us, truths concerning who we are as believers.

That section of chapter 2 I'm referring to is verses 4 through 10. So would you listen as I read through verses 4 through 10 of 1 Peter chapter 2.

Coming to him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by man, but chosen by God and precious.

You also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[1:18] Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on him will by no means be put to shame.

Therefore, to you who believe, he is precious. But to those who are disobedient or disbelieving, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, they stumble being disobedient to the word to which they also were appointed.

But you are also, or you are, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Tremendous passage of scripture. Now in these verses that I read this morning, we read them last Sunday as well, we have here really a survey of God's grand plan for his people.

That's really what I think we have here. Peter is not commanding us to do anything. Peter is not in this text telling us what has been done per se.

[2:51] He's been doing that and did that in chapter 1. Giving us a description of our great salvation. And then issuing some commands that spring from, based upon, or what our salvation demands of us.

And now he's not commanding us. He is describing who we are. Not only who we are right now. Much of what he says about that we have really not discovered as we should have.

But not only what we are right now, but what we are and will be one day. It's a tremendous description of who God's people are. And who are God's people?

Well, that is also described for us in numerous places throughout the text. Let me just point them out to you real quickly. In verse 4, God's people are those who have responded to the gospel and have, what?

Come. Come to Jesus, the living stone. Those who, verse 6, have believed on him.

[4:02] And were not disappointed. Not been put to shame. Verse 9, those who are God's chosen, royal, holy, special people.

And also in verse 9, those who God called out, out of the darkness, into his marvelous light. Verse 10, those who once were not a people, but are now the people of God.

Those who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained the mercy of God. So you see, the description of who God's people are, runs throughout the entire text. And God has a grand plan for his people.

It's a tremendous plan. It's something huge, something big. Now, as I have just kind of pulled out from the text, those several designations or descriptions of who God's people are, if that defines the spiritual reality of your life, then you're part of God's grand plan.

Something really big. And what is it? Well, let me again give it to you in a nutshell. Now, God's grand plan for his people is this.

[5:18] He is building a temple for his glory. And we are that temple. Number two, he, or every temple, rather, needs priests.

Priests to serve. And we are those priests. A royal priesthood. God's own special people. And then third, the duty of the priest is to serve the Lord.

And chief among the, his or her points of service is to offer the sacrifice. And we are that sacrifice. Spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Christ, Peter said. I said, we're all three. Temple, priest, sacrifice. We're the temple being built up on Christ.

We are the priests serving the Lord. We are the acceptable sacrifice. So then, last Sunday, we discovered that, number one, God is building us into a spiritual temple.

[6:26] And that's where we spent our time last week. He's building us into a spiritual temple for his glory. Its form is spiritual. It's a spiritual house, Peter said here. Its founder and its framer is God.

He says, there I, speaking of God, or God is speaking, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone. And therefore, the foundation of this temple is the chief cornerstone.

It's the Lord Jesus Christ chosen by God, tested and tried by man. Many of them rejected him, as Peter tells us here.

But to those who believe, he's precious. But more importantly, he's a sure foundation. A firm foundation, an indestructible foundation. That's our Lord Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone.

He's the foundation of this temple that God is building for his glory. And then finally, the framework of the temple. Every building has to have a framework, has to have the building materials, has to have the structure.

[7:29] And the framework, according to Peter, is you and me. The redeemed of the Lord. The Lord's living stones.

The living stones of the living stone. The Lord Jesus Christ. Living saints of the living Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul said in Ephesians 2.21, being fitted together.

That's what God's doing. Fitting us together. Paul goes on, growing into, what? A holy temple in the Lord. Being built together.

Not only together in the sense that you and I as believers are being built together, but built together with the Lord. He's the chief cornerstone. Being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

That's tremendous, isn't it? Now, there's a second truth here. This will be our focus this morning. Because every temple has to have occupants. And specifically, the occupants are the priests.

[8:35] They're the ones who live in the temple. The priests. The priesthood. Those who are serving the Lord. So not only are we being built up a spiritual temple, a spiritual house unto the Lord for His glory, but also we're being built up a holy priesthood.

Or, literally, we are a holy priesthood. So, first of all, Peter says, you are the temple, are the spiritual house of God, and then he kind of mixes the metaphor just a little bit here and says, not only are you the house, the spiritual house, but you're also the servants in it.

You're also the priests. And that's what he tells us here in verse 5. Now, I might remind you that verses 4 and 5 is the clear statement of the truth, the whole truth, and then from verses 6 on, he expounds or gives the support for that truth, primarily from the Old Testament.

But in verse 5, he says, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, and then what? A holy priesthood. A holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to the Lord, or through Christ.

All right, so we are a priesthood. Now, what is a priesthood? I mean, what does that mean? I mean, we're Baptists and we don't have priests. I have on occasion being referred to as a priest, but I'm not a priest in the sense of the Old Testament priesthood.

[10:07] And so, this whole idea of a priesthood is kind of foreign to us Baptists. And so, what is it? Well, it's certainly, as I've already suggested, a clear illusion or reference to the Old Testament priesthood.

In fact, I mentioned last Sunday that the spiritual house, that's how it's translated here, and indeed, it is the word house, even in the Greek text, is still, nevertheless, an illusion of the temple, the Old Testament.

So, it's an Old Testament temple that Peter's using here, referring to, and it is an Old Testament priesthood that he's referring to. And yet, though the illusion is to the Old Testament, the Old Testament priesthood, there is nevertheless a huge difference, as we're going to see.

But first, what do we know about the Old Testament priesthood? I think we probably know a little bit about it, don't we? Even though we're not Jews, and certainly not over the Old Testament economy, or dispensation, but God called and set apart a certain group of people to serve him as priests. They were Levites, and they were called Levites because they were of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve tribes. And unlike the other tribes, they were not given land for possession, the Lord was their possession.

[11 : 40] And they were to serve the Lord. They had special privileges and special responsibilities, and first of all, they served the Lord in the wilderness tabernacle. Remember when Moses and God's people constructed the tabernacle as God had prescribed that they build it, and so that was the center of worship, the place of worship.

It was the signification of the presence of God among the people, and so the Levites served the Lord in the tabernacle, the wilderness tabernacle, and then later you remember that King David had a son named Solomon, and Solomon built a house for God, something that was in the heart of David, but David was not allowed to build it, and Solomon built the temple, the first temple, and it was glorious, a wonder of the world.

And so they served the Lord in the temple, and then from then on, several temples after that, because they kept getting destroyed, and there's not one standing today because it was destroyed by the Romans.

But when the temple was erected, and all of it was there, and the sacrificial system that God had prescribed in the Old Testament was in place, the priests, the Levites, they served the Lord and took care of all of those duties, and they had a lot of duties, actually, because they had to tend to the house.

That was their house, the Lord's house, the temple, and they had a lot of duties there, but chief among them would be to offer the sacrifices to the Lord under the Old Testament system prescribed by the law.

[13 : 15] And so when the people brought, according to the law, brought the animal to be sacrificed, the priests would take care of that. They would slit its throat and shed its blood, and then they would offer the carcass of the sacrifice on the altar of sacrifice, and then there was one among them, you remember, that was called the high priest, remember?

The high priest, and his duty primarily was to offer up the most important of sacrifices, the supreme sacrifice of all, and it was done on the Day of Atonement each year, and only on the Day of Atonement, and the high priest then would take the blood of the goat that had been shed, and he would take that blood and go through the thick veil of the Holy of Holies, that center part of the temple where the Ark of the Covenant was placed, and he would enter into the Holy of Holies, and he would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat, that golden lid that sat there on top of the Ark of the Covenant, and that whole thing would signify that the sins of the people had been atoned for.

They'd been covered by the blood of the sacrifice. Now, in the Old Testament system, I'm going to draw this together, make a point, and then connect this with what Peter has said here.

In the Old Testament system, only the high priest could offer that sacrifice. Just him, no one else. And he could only do that one day out of the year.

Just one day. And so, in the Old Testament, it was one man in behalf of all the people, one sacrifice for all the sins of the people for that year because it was just once a year, one time a year.

[15 : 08] And you may know all of that. So, what you may not have thought of is what kind of message that gives, that conveys.

Well, maybe a number of things, but the message that I'm getting at is that it was not an easy thing to approach God in the Old Testament. Not an easy thing at all.

And not anybody could do it. Only the priests. And most significantly, only the high priest. And then just one time a year.

And that one time of the year, the Day of Atonement, was a very sacred event. And I'll just tell you, though we can't go into all the details, the first high priest had to go through quite a process in order to be worthy, in order to be accepted to go into the Holy of Holies.

He had to go through quite a process prescribed by the law of God. He had to himself go through a ceremonial washing just as prescribed by God.

[16 : 15] He had to make his own spiritual confession of sin. And that wouldn't be enough. He had to offer up a sacrifice for himself. A blood sacrifice for himself so that his sins would be clean.

So that he would be clean when he entered in to the very presence of God. First, he had to put on the right clothing. Quite an elaborate list of things that he had to wear as the high priest. And he had to go through all the rituals that were prescribed by God. And he had to follow the right procedures as he entered into the Holy of Holies.

He had to do everything just exactly according to the letter of the law. And even then, there was no guarantee that he would be accepted.

Even then. You see, when he went in behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, he entered alone and no one could go in there with him.

[17 : 20] And there was no guarantee that God would accept him. In fact, historians tell us that on his priestly garment, his robe, they sewed bells around the hem of the robe so that they would give off a little tinkle as bells do.

And they would also tie a rope to his ankle or leg or maybe around his waist. Why would they do that? Because when he went in to the Holy of Holies to offer up the most important sacrifice, the sacrifice for the atoning of all the sins of the people, when he went in there he had to go alone and none of the other priests could go in and follow him.

And they would listen for the sound of the tinkling of the bells that had been sewn around the hem of his garment. And if the bells stopped and there was silence then something was wrong.

Either God had struck him down because he did not follow the law to the letter or maybe he passed out or maybe got sick or maybe even died of some other natural cause.

Whatever the case, they could not go in and retrieve him and so the rope then would serve to pull him out. See? I'm describing all this because I want us to get some sense of the fact that approaching God was not an easy thing in the Old Testament.

[18 : 42] In fact, no one could approach God except the high priest. It was a frightening event even for him.

Only the high priest, one man, one sacrifice, one time a year, he could enter into the presence of God and offer the sin offering for the sins of the people and the ordinary and ordinary Israelite could not offer his own sacrifice.

Could not do it himself or herself. They couldn't do it. They had to go through the priest to offer the sacrifice. He had to do it for them and anybody who stepped in to the priesthood or took upon themselves to perform any aspect of the priesthood would be in big trouble with God.

Big trouble. They were in danger of severe judgment. Do you remember Korah? Way back there in the Old Testament.

Korah. Remember him? I'm going to assume that some of you don't remember Korah. The short story is that Korah and his ilk not only rebelled against Moses and Aaron but they were actually rebelling against not just their leadership but they were rebelling against this whole idea of an ordained priesthood.

[20 : 23] And so they were going to take it upon themselves to do all that themselves. In fact, they said to Moses, you think too highly of yourself. You know what happened to them? Korah and his family and everything.

The Bible says the earth opened up and they went straight down into hell. The Bible says the pit but the idea is hell.

I mean, they just went straight. They got a one-way ticket to hell immediately. I tell you, God's serious about this. You can read about that, by the way, in Numbers 16 if you want to.

Hey, do you remember King Saul? Remember, on one occasion he was about to go into battle with God's people and Samuel was running a little late.

Samuel the priest was to offer up the incense and perform the things that needed to be done so that they would be consecrated for the battle.

[21 : 21] and Saul got a little bit more than impatient. He decided not to wait for Samuel and so he just performed the task himself. You can read about that in 1 Samuel.

And when Samuel did get there he said, Saul, you have acted foolishly by doing this. And so the kingly line ends. That is, in your family it ends right here.

The kingdom is being given to another. Now you might say, well he got off a little bit better than Korah and he did. That's God's prerogative.

The point is, for a someone not ordained to the priesthood in the Old Testament system to step in to the priesthood and do any function of the priesthood evoked the wrath of God, the punishment of

God in some form or another.

Do you remember King Uzziah? In 2nd Chronicles chapter 26 wish we had time to look at these but it's enough just to describe it.

[22:33] King Uzziah took upon himself thought he would just be priest too. King and priest. And God struck him down with leprosy.

Now he didn't die right away. In fact the Bible says he had leprosy the rest of his life. That's a serious thing with God. You see in the Old Testament God was untouchable.

God was inaccessible in a large sense. No one could perform any of the acceptable sacrifices that would be accepted by his ordained priests.

No one else could do that. No one was allowed into his holy presence. No one except the high priest and then only one time a year. I mean listen, do you remember Uzzah?

Uzzah back there in David's day and they're transporting the Ark of the Covenant on a cart of all things and the oxen are drawing it and that little trailer or little wagon is tipping and all Uzzah did was put his hand up there to steady the Ark and God struck him down dead.

[23:46] I don't have time to explain maybe all the meaning of these things other than to get to this one main meaning that in the Old Testament way, the Old Testament system, God was unapproachable.

You could not just come to him except through the priest and the priest served as the go between, the bridge so to speak that would bridge the gap between man and God.

That's the way God designed it. He set it up and he did so for a purpose. But now on into the New Testament, now we have Peter saying that that has all changed.

All that that I described about Korah and Saul and all those things that happened to them because they presumed to take upon themselves the duties of priest and the punishment that they received because they disobeyed God in that way, all that has changed.

that's all over with now that Christ has come. That's the point here. In the Old Testament, God's people had a priesthood ordained by God.

[24:57] But in the New Testament, God's people are the priesthood. Every one of us here. If you're saved. in the church, every born again believer is a priest before the Lord.

And the essence of what it means to be a priest is to have access to God. Free access to God. Well, free, certainly not free, it was bought and paid for by Jesus in his blood.

We have access to God. Now that Christ has come, we're able to go, each of us, able to go directly to God. You have a pastor who loves you, but I'm not your priest.

I'm not your priest. And you don't need me to be. We have some godly elders serving in this church, but they're not your priests. And you don't need for them to be.

You can go to God directly. You can talk to God directly. You can have access to the very throne of God directly and need fear.

[26:00] No, no punishment. No, exclusion. You can come before Him without any shame because of Christ.

Because of Christ. We're separated unto God. Granted admission to God, just like the Levites. Access to God's holy presence.

I say just like the Levites, but much, much better. And so let's just see all the details Peter gives us concerning our priestly status with God. And that's what verse 9 provides for us.

And that's where we'll center our focus. Verse 9. Would you look at that again? But you are. By the way, that's a strong transition here.

Grammatically, but it is even in English. but you on the other hand. That is in distinction or contrary to those I've been describing for you here in verse 8.

[27:09] Those disobedient ones. You on the other hand are what? A chosen generation. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We have this incredible description of us here. It's like Peter is just kind of piling on the descriptions. But each of them are heavy with meaning. So in stark contrast to the disobedient, the disbelieving, verse 8, God's people are what?

A chosen generation. We are a royal priesthood. we are a holy nation. We're all of these things.

We are a special people. A people of God's own possession who once were not a people at all.

Now he's not describing what, you know, one of these things may be what you are and one of these

things may be what you are and maybe a holy nation involves this group or that group. We're all of these things equally. And yet all of these identifications or descriptions are full of meaning.

[28 : 39] And they all come under that heading of holy priesthood. First, let's just break these down here this morning. first, we are a selected people.

We are selected by God. There's no getting around that. We are selected by God. A chosen generation.

This is incredible. The word chosen is the Greek word eklitos. means elect.

We're elect by God. We're God's elect people. Elect. And it appears, by the way, that word appears three times in this larger text.

Verse four, speaking of the living stone, rejected indeed by man, but what? Elect by God. Now, he's referring here to Jesus.

[29 : 49] Chosen by God, elect by God, and precious. And you move on down there to verse six, where he's quoting the Old Testament, behold, I lay in Zion, a chief cornerstone, chosen, elect, precious.

And you move on down to the text I just wrote, you are a red, you are a chosen, elect, generation. And so what about the word generation?

Well, the word generation is the Greek word from which we get the word generation, genos, and it means generation, but more specifically, or maybe it's better to identify it, or to think of it in these terms, a race.

In fact, some translations of the Bible render it that way. A race of people. Now, this is pretty neat. I mean, if I can use the word neat. Is that alright? This is neat. We're an elect race.

[30 : 53] That is, the word race meaning a people with a common life. Not just lifestyle, a common life in its origin.

we have a common ancestry, or a common, the technical word is descent. That is, we are born into the same family.

That's the people he's describing here. The chosen generation. People born into the same family. That is, children of the same father.

That's the idea here. Now, Peter is pulling this description from the Old Testament. In fact, he is pulling it from Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 6.

Deuteronomy 7, 6. Let me just read it to you. Well, I will when I get there. Where is it? Deuteronomy 7, now listen to this, verse 6, for you are a holy people to the Lord your God.

[31 : 59] The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself. a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

Now, it goes on to say, the Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples.

And so why did he choose you? Because the Lord loves you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers. The Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Now, he's talking about Egypt there, right? Therefore, know, he says, that the Lord your God, he is God. Now, he's drawing from this passage here, only he kind of shortens it a little and maybe tweaks it just a little bit.

And in case you're thinking then that Peter is talking about God's people, the Jews, Jews. That maybe this reference to the chosen generation doesn't apply to Gentiles, it just applies to Jews, because that's certainly what Deuteronomy 7 is talking about, God's holy people, God's people Israel.

[33 : 12] And just in case you're thinking that's what Peter's talking about, then you need to understand that this letter, 1 Peter, was written to Jews and Gentiles, both. And so he has in mind both Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

And so where Deuteronomy 7 describes the Jews as the chosen people of God, Peter here, under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, identifies here in the New Testament that the New Testament church is the chosen people of God.

Elect. 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

That's why I say we're selected by God, a select generation. Jesus said in John 15 16, you did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.

What a tremendous thing. Now this is of course the doctrine of election. And let me just tell you why we should believe in it. Or maybe what it means to us.

[34 : 25] In fact, let me just give you five words. You can just jot down real quickly. First word is arrogance. You say, how does that have to do with the quote, doctrine of election that's taught throughout Scripture?

What does the word arrogance have to do with it? Well, just this. It renders it impossible. Any arrogance. In fact, tonight in Romans chapter 3 and verse 27, that's where we'll be tonight, where Paul answers the kind of question, you know, where then is boasting?

Because, see, Paul's talking about salvation, our great salvation by grace through faith, and we're justified by faith and not works. And so in verse 27 of Romans chapter 3 he says, where then is boasting?

And he answers the question, it is excluded. There's no room for any arrogance when it comes to God's choosing of us to be his own possession.

The second word is reverence. And I'll go through these quickly. I didn't tend to spend a lot of time on them. You can just jot them down. Arrogance, that is, it renders it impossible.

[35 : 39] Reverence, in that it gives God all the credit and glory. And within that word reverence, I lump in all of our praise and our worship. So arrogance, reverence, and then third, obedience, because it makes you want to obey him.

Live for him. Just to think that God, by his grace, not because we're more in number than any other people, not because anything about us or anything that we've done or could do or will do because of his love for us.

Specific, chosen. I mean, that makes me want to obey him, serve him. The fourth word is assurance.

We studied that Monday night and Tom Holland brought a great lesson from 1 John on assurance. And so why do I use the word assurance here? Because it removes all fear of judgment.

All fear. And then the last word is exuberance. It creates real and lasting joy.

[37 : 04] So we are selected by God. Second, we are sovereign with God. God's sound a little strange to you, but I'm just taking this right from the Bible.

We are sovereign. We are sovereign with God. This is who we are. And he uses the term or the designation a royal priesthood.

That's interesting. God's God's kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

And he draws this from Exodus 19 and verse 6 where the Bible says, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

A kingdom of priests. Christ. And so he's drawing it from that passage there in Exodus 19 verse 6 only very dramatically, very significantly he changes it.

[38 : 11] It's quite different here. When he says, you are a royal priesthood. A royal priesthood. That's a strange combination.

You say, well how so? Well the adjective royal is the word kingly. And that probably makes sense. But maybe it makes more sense to use that term. And so what Peter is saying here, what he has in mind here, is a race of people. This race has been selected by God.

This race of people have a common life, common ancestry, children of the same family, of the same father. This nation people, this generation, they are a race of king priests.

King priests. That's what we are. Which, by the way, is a strange combination because it was absolutely forbidden in the Old Testament.

[39 : 21] Remember King Uzziah? Thought he'd be a king priest. got leprosy for his efforts. So it's unknown in the Old Testament.

So how then can we be king priests? Well, don't forget now that Peter opened this with the metaphor of a house.

A temple. And so we are being built up into a holy temple. A spiritual house. And Peter then combines the metaphor of the house with that of a priesthood in verse 5.

And then verse 9 he calls it a royal priesthood. Or more literally, we are a royal house of priests. That's what we are. That's what we are through Christ. We are king priests of a royal house, the royal house of God.

[40:20] And it carries with it the idea of sovereignty. Oh, yes it does. Let me just give you a few passages in the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 1 and verse 5.

Just listen to this. And from Jesus, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth, to him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests.

priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. And then how about chapter 5 and verse 9.

Revelation chapter 5 and verse 9. And they sang a new song, talking about the redeemed, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood.

Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. That's Jews and Gentiles and all of them. And we, and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on earth.

[41:37] There it is again. How about one more? Revelation chapter 20 and verse 6. In fact, let me move up to verse 4. And I saw thrones.

This is what John saw. I saw thrones and they, the redeemed of all the ages. They sat on them and judgment was committed to them. And then verse 6, Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.

That's us. Over such, the second death, God's judgment, has no power. That's us. But they shall be priests of God, of Christ, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

You have them together there. Now how can this be? I mean, how can that be? When in the Old Testament, the priestly line was clearly set apart, separated from the kingly line.

And when the two came together, there were some dire, dire results. So how can they come together? Well, the answer is Jesus. Jesus Christ.

[42:47] He is both king and priest. King-priest. Now, we understand how He could be king because He is the house of the house and lineage of David, right?

And we understand that part of Him. We can trace His right to the throne, to David's throne, to the eternal throne. We can trace that genealogically as well as prophetically. We can do that very easily. But what right did Jesus have to the priesthood?

I mean, He was not of the tribe of Levi. He was of the tribe of Judah. No priest ever came out of Judah. At least not until Jesus.

There was no priestly line in the tribe of Judah. That was not according to God's plan. And He also is referred to in the Bible as the high priest, our great high priest.

And so, how could that be? I mean, Jesus was not in the priestly line of Aaron, out of which the high priest came. How then could Jesus be king priest?

[43:58] Well, His origin is not man. And therefore, His priestly line does not trace back to man.

In Hebrews chapter 7 says, He is our high priest by the order of Melchizedek. That figure back in the Old Testament, remember?

King of Salem? Salem one day would become Jerusalem, whose birth was unknown, had no beginning, no end, a lot of things they didn't know about Melchizedek, but Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.

And He was a priest, priest of Salem, and king. And Hebrews 7 says that that's, Jesus is our high priest by the order of Melchizedek.

His origin is in eternity past. His right to the priesthood goes out into eternity.

[45:15] And as hard as that is to understand, what we need to understand here is that we, through faith, we are connected with Jesus Christ as king priests.

He's the living stone, the chief cornerstone upon which we are built. Because of that, we are king priests, and we will one day rule with Him as sovereign king, queen, priests.

This is who we are now in Christ, though now we are kings in beggars' clothing, because it's not yet been revealed. And so what we really are and will be, will be actuated when Jesus Christ comes and He establishes His throne here on this earth, His reign for a thousand years during the millennium, and the Bible says clearly more than once that we shall reign with Him.

Now I don't know the extent and the makeup and all the responsibilities of that reign, I just know that the Bible says that we are priests and kings, and during that one thousand year reign, we will serve Him as priests, and we will reign with Him as kings, and that will, by the way, continue on beyond the one thousand year reign, on into eternity, and into a heavenly existence, and what that's

going to consist of, I have no idea whatsoever.

But we shall continue to be priests-kings. This is who we are in Christ. That's who we are. Selected by God, sovereign, with God, and then third, sanctified for God.

[47:01] I love this one. Peter calls us a holy nation, a holy nation. The word nation comes from the Greek word *ethnos*.

We get our word ethnic from it. Ethnicity, *ethnos*, people, or nation. And so it refers then to a specific group of people.

I mean, that's what he's been kind of highlighting with each of these designations. We're a special group of people, specific. And it appears here in the singular form, which generally is a reference and used to reference the Jews.

Generally, it appears in the plural form to refer to the Gentile, the Gentile nation. But here it's in the singular. So is he talking about the Jews here?

No. Because the context tells us. Because we know that Peter wrote this letter to Jewish and Gentile readers.

[48:09] And so Peter is saying here by this, he's saying even though you have come from many different nations of the world, Jew, and all the Gentile nations, even though you come from many different nations, spiritually speaking, because of Christ and your faith in Christ, you are now one distinct special nation or people.

That's who you are. And this, of course, is the church. The church, the bride of Christ. And that's all well and good, but the more significant word here for us is the word holy.

The holy, the adjective holy, *hagios*, holy, holy nation, a holy people. And used here in the sense of a separated people.

Separated people, a set-apart people, a sanctified people. That's who we are. That's what it means, what holy means here. See, God is building a temple for his glory.

And we are that temple. And God is forming a holy priesthood for his service. And we are that priesthood. And to put it another way, we are the temple of God and we are its chosen occupants and the chosen occupants of that temple are all priests selected by God, sovereign with God and sanctified for God.

[49:43] And so what does it mean to be sanctified? It's a big theological word, this word sanctified or sanctification.

Peter said in chapter 1 and verse 2 that God's people are elect, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit or by or through the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

So let's just learn very quickly some things about sanctification. I'll give these to you very quickly and I recommend you jot them down if you can.

First of all, it is positional, therefore we persevere in sanctification.

Can I say that again? That's where you begin in our understanding of sanctification. It is positional. Therefore we persevere in sanctification.

[50:46] That's what Peter is getting at there in chapter 1 verse 2 that I quoted just a moment ago. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God through by the sanctification sanctifying work of the Spirit.

That's a positional thing. That's something God did. It's a gracious act of God. And so we are no longer then from the point of our salvation that act of God where He sanctifies us.

Positionally we are no longer in bondage to sin. We still can sin and do sin but we are no longer in bondage to it and we are no longer in bondage to the devil, no longer in bondage to death and we are no longer under the judgment of God.

God has placed us there and we then persevere there eternally because God did it and we didn't. That's what we understand from the last part of verse 9 there. Look at that again. That you may proclaim the praises of Him who did what?

[51:50] Called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. That's what God did. Therefore we persevere. So number one it is this thing of being set apart, sanctifying, by God.

It is positional, therefore we persevere in sanctification. Number two, it is a process. Therefore we progress in sanctification.

Y'all looking at me like, so what? We need to get this down. It's important. It's a process. It's a process.

It's an ongoing thing. Therefore it is that as we progress in sanctification. See, as a holy people, a holy nation, we are in a constant process of being separated from sin and separated unto God. It's a constant thing that's going on in our lives. 1 Peter 1, 2 says, in effect, we have been sanctified. That's positional. But then when you get to 1 Peter 1, 15 and 16, and through there, the idea there is we are to be sanctified.

[53:07] That is, it's a process. And that's the idea behind such passages as Romans 8, 29. for whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that we might be the firstborn among many brethren.

That's the idea behind Philippians chapter 1, verse 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will do what? He'll complete it until, until the day of Jesus Christ.

That is, it is progress. We, progress is guaranteed. Third, it is practical. You understand?

It's practical, therefore we participate in sanctification. This is very important, because this is our part. Still, we can't accomplish it apart from God, apart from his grace, but this is our part.

It is practical. Sanctification is practical. It's a practical thing. Therefore, we participate in sanctification. Sanctification is practical in the sense that it involves activity.

[54:24] Activity on our part. It's practical. That is, it involves a certain practice in life. That is the way we conduct our lives.

And so, our participation with God is required. See? that's the thinking behind Peter's commands that he gives us in chapter 1 and on into chapter 2.

We studied those months ago, where he commanded us to do this and this and this and this and all of them tied to conduct. And so, we are participating with the work of God, the sanctifying work of God.

And so, it is a process, therefore we progress. It is practical, therefore we participate. And then fourth, it is personal. Therefore, we praise God for our sanctification.

This is the point of worship in our sanctification. Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 21, the Bible says, this people I have formed for myself, they shall declare my praise.

[55:27] So, it's personal. Therefore, we praise. So, selected by God. Sovereign with God. Sanctified for God.

And then, special to God. Special to God. His own special people is how the New King James version translates it.

His own special people. Actually, I rather like the King James translation, a peculiar people. That's what we are. Don't look at me like that.

We're all kind of peculiar, aren't we? I assure you, we are. But really, all kidding aside, I think the New American Standard has it best.

Maybe you have that translation. Where it says that we are a people for God's own possession. Did you know that's who you are?

[56:38] A people for God's own possession. The idea, that's the idea behind the particular word that Peter chose to use.

In fact, the literal translation would be, now get this, to make around. Doesn't that just bless your heart? No.

I think that blesses my heart. I don't understand that. To make around. It's a compound word.

There's a preposition in there. So you put it together. Both words together means to make around. And what's the idea?

That's really quite amazing. The idea here is to make something and then surround it with a circle thus indicating ownership.

It's a rich word. Kind of like the preacher who was preaching revival at a church. And during the week he was staying with a family there.

[57:41] So they were providing all of his meals. And the lady of the house was quite a cook. And so after the first service they went to the house and getting ready to have a meal.

And the table was all set. And delicious meal set before them. And this preacher is sitting there and the son of the family was sitting there.

He was a little boy and the rest of the family hadn't come yet. And there between them was this platter of homemade rolls. fresh baked rolls. It smelled so good.

And so they're sitting there and the little boy looks up at the preacher and he kind of gives a little snide little smile. And he takes his finger and goes, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine.

Well, the next day, that evening, just before the revival service, another great meal was prepared and more fresh baked rolls.

[58:42] And guess what? Little boy did the same thing. Mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine. Well, the third time out the preacher was not going to be disappointed.

And so they sat there and here he is, he and the boy sitting at the table and there are the fresh baked rolls again. And the preacher goes, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine. And so the little boy said, yours, yours, yours, yours, yours, yours, yours.

Yours. So what in the world does that have to do with it? Well, God formed and selected us, sanctified us for himself and says, mine, mine, mine, mine.

God is a possessive God. We are his own position. I've already quoted Isaiah 43, 21 in connection with sanctification, but it applies here as well.

Where the prophet said, this people, I have formed for myself. And guess what? In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, they use the same word that Peter used here in 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 9.

[60:08] Same word. His own special people. That's who we are in Christ. That's who you are in Christ. And by the way, it's even better than that.

If that's possible. The word that he used for people, laos, is in the singular.

And that means that each individual person is God's own possession. Each of us, individually.

That is, you are God's unique possession, just as if you were the only one in existence. That's the idea here. Isn't that incredible?

This is who we are in Christ. And then I'll just name the last one and not have time to go through it, but we are, number five, saved and secured by God.

[61:15] And that's the idea behind verse 10. Who once were not a people, but are now.

Who? The people of God. Something happened. God saved you. Who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

saved and secured by God. Is that the spiritual reality of your life?

I mean, can you say that? That's true of me. I know that's the reality of my life. All these things Peter's talking about here, that is who I am.

God's Because I have come to Jesus. And I have believed on Him. I do belong to Him.

[62:26] Is that the spiritual, eternal reality of your life? God's love. If not, the invitation is to come to Him.

Come to Him. Trust Him. God's love. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Thank you.