

The Believer's Privileges, Part 5: Election and Dominion

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9a

Code: 60-21

INTRODUCTION

A. The Cost of Being a Christian

The Bible says much about the cost of being a Christian. Many times our Lord emphasized the cost of discipleship. In Luke 14:26-31 He says to the multitudes, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"

In Matthew 10:37-38 Jesus says, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. "

There is a cost to being a Christian, and that cost must be assessed. Those who come to a true knowledge of Christ also come to understand that certain sacrifices are necessary in the Christian life. Certain things must be done and other things must be turned away from. That is a continuing emphasis throughout the New Testament.

B. The Privileges of Being a Christian

In contrast to that theme is what we find in 1 Peter 2:4-10: the dividends of being a Christian. Peter deals here with the rewards, treasures, and riches that believers receive. He does not deal with what we have had to give up, but with the spiritual privileges that belong to every believer in Jesus Christ. Throughout the New Testament there is great emphasis on our spiritual privileges.

1. Romans 9:22-23--"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? . . . He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory. " We who are Christians are the vessels of mercy upon whom the riches of God's glory are and will be poured.

2. Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

3. Ephesians 1:7-8--"In [Christ] we have redemption through His blood [and] the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us"--not will lavish but has lavished already.

4. Ephesians 2:7--God will show "the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. "

5. Ephesians 3:8--Paul's main ministry was "to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ. "

6. Ephesians 3:16--Paul prayed for God to strengthen the church "according to the riches of His glory. "

7. Philippians 4:19--"God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
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All who are Christians should be filled with joy and thanksgiving in contemplating those great truths!

REVIEW

I. THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR PRIVILEGES (v. 4)

II. THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF OUR PRIVILEGES (vv. 5-10)

A. Union (v. 5a)

B. Access (v. 5b)

C. Security (v. 6)

D. Affection (v. 7-8)

God granted believers the exclusive privilege of loving Christ. The apostle Paul said, "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (Eph. 6:24). There is no more exhilarating emotion than the joy of love.

On the other hand, unbelievers are doomed by disobedience, unbelief, and lack of love for Christ.

Those three attitudes prove they are unregenerate. Paul also said, "If any one does not love the Lord, let him be accursed" (1 Cor. 16:22). Lesson

E. Chosen by God (v. 9a)

"You are a chosen race. "

1. The point of the passage

With another turn of the kaleidoscope of our spiritual privileges, Peter now focuses on the doctrine of election. Peter ties verse 9 to verse 8 with an emphatic adversative--a strong "but" that contrasts those to whom Peter had been referring to those he was now going to address. The idea is, "Unlike those who are destined for destruction because of their unbelief, you on the other hand are a chosen race. " The Greek term translated "race" refers to the source of the persons it describes. Peter emphasized that Christians are a race produced from a divine source.

2. The Old Testament precedent

Throughout 1 Peter 2:4-10 Peter makes extensive use of the Old Testament. He alludes to it in verses 4-5 and makes direct quotations in verses 6-8. In verse 9 Peter alludes to Deuteronomy 7:6-9: "You are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God. " Peter viewed the church as the redeemed community of God, chosen just as Israel was chosen. In Isaiah 43:21 we find a similar affirmation regarding Israel: "The people whom I formed for Myself, will declare My praise. " God identified Israel as His chosen people, a designation they have retained throughout the centuries.

3. The New Testament parallel

First Peter 2:9 tells us there is another chosen race: the church. First Peter 1:1-2 explains that the church was "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit. "God's choice of believers is our most important privilege because all the other privileges come as a result of His choice. If you are a Christian, you should celebrate the privilege of being chosen by God. Scripture repeatedly affirms the great truth of election. a) John 15:16--Jesus said to His disciples, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you. "b) Acts 13:48--"When the Gentiles heard [that the gospel applied to them], they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. " God appointed them to eternal life and they believed. c) Romans 9:13-16--Defending God's choice in election, Paul cited Old Testament

precedent: "It is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.' What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. "d) Romans 11:5--"There has also come to be at the present time a remnant [of believing Israelites] according to God's gracious choice. "e) 1 Corinthians 1:9--"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son. "f) Ephesians 1:3-5--"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. . . . He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself. "g) 1 Thessalonians 1:4--Paul encouraged the Thessalonian church by pointing out the fact of their election: "Knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you. "h) 2 Thessalonians 2:13--Likewise he said, "We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation. "i) 2 Timothy 1:9--God "saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity. "j) 2 Timothy 2:10--Paul said, "I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. "k) Revelation 13:8--"All who dwell on the earth will worship [the Beast], everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. " The names of God's chosen were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world (cf. Rev. 17:8). l) Revelation 20:15--"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. "

4. The theological perspective

a) Christians are chosen according to God's foreknowledge God did not chose anyone because of what he or she did or will do. He sovereignly determined to set His love upon us for divine reasons we may never fully understand. When Peter stated that God chose us according to His foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1:2) , he did not mean that God knew beforehand what we were going to do and chose us based on that knowledge. Foreknowledge is a theological reference to God's deliberate choice. b) Christians are chosen the same way Jesus was A good example of what Peter meant by God's choice is in 1 Peter 2:6, which refers to Christ as a "choice stone. " Believers are chosen and predestined in the same way Christ was chosen by God to fulfill a holy purpose. God said of Christ, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights" (Isa. 42:1). God certainly didn't look down the corridors of history and say to Himself, "Oh, I see, a man named Jesus will do great things so I'll choose Him. " Christ was chosen by the absolute sovereignty of God and believers are chosen in the same way. c) Christians are chosen sovereignly by God If God's decisions were based on man's actions, then man is sovereign and gets the credit for his own faith. That assumes man can and does seek God. Salvation would thus be a human work and God relegated to the status of a second-class deity who doesn't deserve as much glory as those who sought Him. What a horrid contrast to what Scripture teaches! The Bible affirms that God is sovereign, that man gets no credit for his own believing, and that man cannot and does not seek God. God is never portrayed as a victim of man's choices--He is sovereign and believers are chosen.

5. The practical observations

Jeremiah was chosen before he was even born (Jer. 1:5). In the same way believers were chosen by God before the foundation of the world. That choice is activated in time when the Spirit of God prompts the hearts of the individuals concerned to believe. a) The doctrine of election crushes our pride That God sovereignly chooses men and women for salvation devastates our pride. It affirms that man is totally dependant on God to respond in faith toward Him (Eph. 2:8-9). b) The doctrine of election exalts God Election affirms that salvation is all of God. That exalts God more than any other doctrine in Scripture. c) The doctrine of election promotes holiness Christians ought to be so grateful

to God for His grace that they will live for Him at any price--consumed with a passion for obedience. d) The doctrine of election gives strengthWhen God chooses, that choice is eternal and unequivocal. We have nothing to fear and have every right to be confident and strong in faith. e) The doctrine of election produces joyGod's sovereign choice is the only hope for wretched sinners. Nothing could bring more joy because it produces such profound gratitude.

F. Dominion (v. 9b)

"You are . . . a royal priesthood. "

Believers are a royal priesthood--another privilege with an Old Testament parallel. Not only are we priests (already discussed in verse 5--see pp. xx-xx) , but we are also part of a royal household. That is a new concept because in the Old Testament, the offices of king and priest were kept separate (with one striking exception).

1. The Old Testament precedent

Peter's idea of a royal priesthood is drawn from Exodus 19:6, where God said of Israel, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests. " However Israel forfeited the privilege offered to them. Israel was not able to realize dominion because they apostatized and executed their Messiah. Peter affirms that at present the church is royal priesthood of God.

2. The New Testament parallel

a) The office conferredThe royal priesthood of the church serves the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Beyond that, it exercises dominion and rule on its own. We not only serve the King, we also reign with Him. b) The status attainedThe Greek word translated "royal" in 1 Peter 2:9 (basileios) can speak of a royal palace, sovereignty, crown, or monarchy. Here the idea is of royalty in general. Thus the spiritual house verse 5 refers to is a royal house--not a building but a sphere of dominion, like the Royal House of England or France. Peter described the church as a royal house of priests. That squares with other New Testament revelation. (1) Revelation 1:6--Christ "has made us to be a kingdom [of] priests. "(2) Revelation 5:10--It is said of God and the church, "Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth. "(3) Revelation 20:6--"Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him. "(4) Hebrews 7:14-17--The only person who could have established a royal house of priests is the Lord Jesus Christ. Only He was both a king and a priest: "It is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which that Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him, 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"Melchizedek was unique. He was the only royal priest in the Old Testament. Christ was a royal priest similar to Melchizedek in that He didn't inherit His priesthood by coming through the priestly line (Levi). Rather, He came through the royal line of Judah. Christ is King and those who believe in Him will reign with Him. (5) 1 Corinthians 6:1-3--Paul said, "Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?"If you are a Christian, your future is that of a royal priest. You will spend eternity giving offerings to the Lord God and reigning with Christ. You will have dominion over whatever dimensions of heavenly existence that God assigns to you and will rule over angels. Because there is no one between you and the Lord, you are a priest. Because there is no one over you but the Lord, you are a king. That is far above the privileges of the Old Testament priesthood. ConclusionThe many privileges God has given believers should make us grateful to God for all He has done. That gratitude should be expressed both in thanksgiving and confession. If we are grateful for the spiritual privileges that have been freely given us, we will lift our hearts in thankful

praise to God and confess our sins, which so often have ingratitude at their root.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What doctrine is emphasized in 1 Peter 2:9?
2. What two passages in the Old Testament does 1 Peter 2:9 allude to? How do they relate to Peter's subject?
3. Why is election our most important spiritual privilege?
4. According to Romans 9, what does God's choice of the saved depend on?
5. Believers are chosen the same way _____ was.
6. For God's choice to depend on what man does, what would we have to assume about man? What does the Bible say about that?
7. What effect does the sovereign choice of God have on man's pride?
8. What is new about the idea of a royal priesthood?
9. We not only serve the King, we also _____ with Him.
10. What does the future hold for Christians (1 Cor. 6:1-3)?

Pondering the Principles

1. Of the great reformers of the eighteenth century--Whitefield, Wesley, Rowlands, Venn, Toplady, and others it was said, "They knew nothing of the modern notion that Christ is in every man, and that all possess something good within, which they have only to stir up and use in order to be saved. They never flattered men and women in this fashion. They told them plainly that they were dead, and must be made alive again; that they were guilty, lost, helpless, and hopeless, and in imminent danger of eternal ruin. Strange and paradoxical as it may seem to some, their first step towards making men good was to show them that they were utterly bad; and their primary argument in persuading men to do something for their souls was to convince them that they could do nothing at all" (J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the 18th Century* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978 reprint], pp. 26-27). While the doctrines of man's total depravity and God's sovereign election humble man's pride, they produce a profound gratitude in those who realize the extent of God's mercy extended by grace. What has the spiritual privilege of being chosen by God meant in your life?
2. Paul instructed Timothy to "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12, NIV). That is particularly appropriate advice for someone who has the privilege of being a royal priest, who will therefore be closely scrutinized by others. If you are a Christian, you are a royal priest and an example of Christ for all you come in contact with. Read Philippians 2:5-8. How do others think and behave based on your example of Christ? Let that motivate you as you check for any necessary changes in your lifestyle and habits.

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