

## 1 Peter 2:4-10 Part E

**1Pe 2:9 (NKJV) But 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; <sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.**

In v9-10, Peter almost seems beside himself as he draws these seven (7) verses to a close. He provides seven (7) different references to what we as believers really are. He says that we are (1) **“a chosen generation”**, (2) **“a royal priesthood”**, (3) **“a holy nation”**, (4) **“His own special people”**, (5) those who have been **“called out of darkness into His marvelous light”**, (6) **“the people of God”**, and (7) those who **“have obtained mercy”**. Now, no matter how you may understand all of those terms, it is certainly evident that God has accomplished some amazing things for us. He began in v4 and v6 by saying that Christ was **“chosen by God”** and then in v9 he says that we as believers have been **“chosen”** by God – a **“chosen generation”**. The word **“chosen”** is the same Greek word in all three cases – *“eklektos”*. Of the 23 times that the word is used in the New Testament, it is translated as **“elect”** 16 times. For instance, [1 Peter 1:2](#) begins by saying that we are **“elect (*‘eklektos’*) according to the foreknowledge of God”**. In reference to Christ, He was **“chosen”** by God to accomplish the work of salvation for others, and in reference to believers, we have been **“chosen”** by God to receive the benefits of His work. Stated another way, we are the reason that the work of redemption had to be accomplished. Before salvation we were actually called in [Ephesians 2](#) as **“sons of disobedience”** and **“children of wrath”** and were said to be **“dead in trespasses”**. As far as what we could do to resolve this, our spiritual condition was hopeless. Then in [Ephesians 2:4-7](#), Paul said these amazing words,

**Eph 2:4 (NKJV) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

So, in a sense, [1 Peter 2:9-10](#) is the outworking of that **“great love with which He loved us”**. Obviously, we have to remember that our redemption came at a great cost to everyone involved but us. We are simply the recipients, the receivers, the beneficiaries of grace. We did nothing to earn salvation because there simply was nothing that we could have done. In fact, so far in this passage Peter has made it abundantly clear that everyone who is not saved actually **“stumbles”** over Christ, He is **“rejected”** by them, He is an **“offense”** to them, and they are **“disobedient”** to Him.

Once again, it is important to notice that the very first word of these two verses is the word **“But”** – a conjunction of contrast, a conjunction of two dissimilar things. So, immediately we should recognize that Peter is contrasting something – in this case it is a contrast of believers with unbelievers. **“But you...”** Those words could not be more glorious simply because we **“once were not a people”** of God, but now we are. We used to be **“sons of disobedience”**, **“children of wrath”** and **“dead in trespasses”**. We were utterly hopeless, but now we are the only ones with hope. Apart from Christ, no lost man or woman has any future whatsoever. However, as glorious as each of Peter’s terms actually are, it seems, however, that the real thrust and emphasis of these last two verses is actually found in the very small

coordinating conjunction “**that**” – “**that you may proclaim...**” I like the way that the NASB translates it – “**so that...**” It is a very small conjunction that provides an amazing purpose for who we are as Christians. If I can say it this way, Peter says that we have seven unique attributes so that we can literally do one thing – “**proclaim**” the praises and glory of God the Father to a world that is very, very hostile towards Him. In fact, from this point forward in the letter, Peter is going to focus primarily on the believer’s conduct, on how they live. To emphasize this, just follow along with me as I highlight all of the different things that Peter is going to call on believers to do in the remainder of just [1 Peter 2](#). What Peter is going to do is state in very concrete and straightforward terms that as believers that we have to live out our life before a world that is both watching us, as well as being antagonistic towards and resistant of the message that we proclaim. As a Christian, you will not find that the world is either receptive or sympathetic to you. They do not welcome us into their life and they do not see us in favorable terms. So, to enhance the role that God has given to us in a very adverse and unfriendly environment, Peter will become incredibly specific, defined, precise, detailed, and exact. He is going to cover all of the bases by the time that he completes this letter. Notice what he has to say in the remainder of [1 Peter 2](#).

[2:11](#) – “**abstain from fleshly lusts...**”

[2:12](#) – have “**honorable conduct among the Gentiles...**”

[2:13](#) – “**submit yourselves to every ordinance of man...**”

[2:15](#) – do “**good**”

[2:16](#) – use your “**liberty**” wisely

[2:17](#) – “**Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Honor the king.**”

[2:18](#) – “**be submissive to your masters...**”

[2:19](#) – “**endure grief**”, be willing to “**suffer wrongfully**”

[2:20](#) – Take suffering “**patiently**”.

[2:21](#) – When you are reviled, “**do not revile in return**”. When you suffer, do not “**threaten**”. “**Commit yourself to Him who judges righteously.**”

Probably the most important word in the entire epistle is the word “**sanctify**” in [1 Peter 3:15](#) and it literally means that the believer has to set God apart in their heart. This is a word that will rock our complacency, upset our indulgences, and strike at our spiritual indifferences. However, it is a word designed to provoke our intimacy with God. I love the way that Paul expressed some of this in [Philippians 1:27](#) when he said,

Php 1:27 (NKJV) **Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,**

If we are going to understand the word “**proclaim**”, then it is important to understand that we live in a fallen world. It is a world that is both spiritually and morally corrupted and degraded. In fact, man is so debased in his thinking that he sees God as an intrusion into his life. Fallen men live in complete

rebellion against God. The world we see today is a world that is a veritable cesspool of sexual identity confusion and utter purposelessness. Men live in spiritual darkness and are ignorant and possess depraved minds. For instance, [Romans 1:28-32](#) describes their dilemma in the most vivid of terms when it says,

**Ro 1:28 (NKJV) And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.**

When we look at the life of Christ, it is clearly evident that He did not spend the majority of His time teaching His disciples how to communicate the gospel or how to spread the gospel. I am sure that as they walked different places, or when they may have eaten a meal together that those things were discussed. Obviously, knowing how to share the gospel is a very important attribute of being a disciple. However, primarily what Jesus did was to focus on teaching His disciples how to have an intimate relationship with God the Father. Whatever we will become spiritually effective in is directly related to what kind of relationship that we have with God. The deeper a man's walk with God and the more intimate their fellowship with God, the greater will be their understanding of His will for their life. Jesus was the supreme example of this. His entire life was lived in complete dependence on the Father's will for His life. My role as a pastor is to somehow help you cultivate that hunger in your life to be intimate with God, to really love God, and then to "proclaim" that love to people who are lost. The last thing that any of us should want is to have some kind of dry, stale relationship with God. Just going to church can do that for you if you are not careful. The real goal is for our love, devotion, and commitment to Christ to literally become contagious to other. It will be impossible to "**proclaim**" God's praises to others if we personally have no meaningful relationship with Him ourselves.

No matter how many times I read these two verses and no matter what descriptions that Peter provides of my life (as glorious as they are), I simply cannot escape the conjunction "**that**" or "**so that**". Theologically and grammatically, it is often referred to as "terms of purpose or result". I can never divorce my life from my purpose, and this idea of proclaiming God's praises to other people, both lost and saved, is something that must saturate my life. My wife and I know someone that we are dealing with at the present time who has absolutely no purpose in their life. They have no idea of what life is about, why they were even created, or what their purpose in life really is. They are simply confused, completely disorganized, incredibly lazy, have no motivation to accomplish anything in their life, and yet they think that they have the world by the tail. They are arrogant and without respect for others or what others do for them. Their life is the epitome of utter chaos. Our responsibility, and obviously in a gracious manner, is to "**proclaim**" the great things of God to them, and to do it in such a way that it is at least believable.

The word "**proclaim**" is the Greek word "*exangello*" and it literally means to publish with the idea of celebrating, of applauding, of praising the very thing that you are proclaiming. This word means to

publish and declare something completely, to make something widely known.<sup>1</sup> The prefix “*ex*” intensifies the word and means that something is to be done fully, wholly, completely. It means to speak of all of the excellent attributes of God, of who He truly is, and of all that He has done. The antonym of the word is to simply be silent, to keep quiet.<sup>2</sup> It is really a somewhat startling reality as to how silent many Christians are regarding the virtues and excellencies of God. I would be so bold to define our silence as simply the path of least resistance. It is often times much easier to say nothing than to say something. Obviously, there are severe consequences when the church at large takes the path of least resistance and backs away from the culture that is so opposed to it. If someone does reach a place in their life where they are more than willing to proclaim the virtues of God, then they are defined as being hateful, intolerant, judgmental, bigots. We have to appreciate simply because we see it literally every day, but the prevailing agenda of the world is to silence Christians. I was thinking of how the church really has become the “silent majority”. Every day, nearly 4000 innocent children are legally aborted, and if we speak to the issue we are branded as extremists. The networks make a mockery of Christian values and the Christian faith, but they have no problem fully endorsing and promoting greed, materialism, violence, and sexual immorality. Teenage suicide is the highest it has ever been, but Christian values and morals cannot be taught in public schools, but atheistic immorality can. Rock music fills the airways and fills children’s minds with rape, murder, forced sex, adultery, satanic worship, and anything else that suits their fancy. The issue is that if the church just remains silent on issues that are defining the culture, then the culture wins. We have to appreciate that there is a legitimate time when silence is sinful. Listen to what [Ephesians 5:11](#) says,

Eph 5:11 (NKJV) **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.**

For believers to simply ignore evil is really a way of actually encouraging it. The less we say about evil and sin, the more we actually promote it. A Christian’s silent testimony only goes so far.

It was interesting to me that this is the only place that this particular Greek word for “**proclaim**” is used in the New Testament and it refers not only to what someone says, but also to how they live – their lifestyle, their convictions, and the outworking of those convictions. I have said it often, but the person who does not live out their convictions does not have any. In other words, we proclaim Christ with our words and we proclaim Christ with our life. In fact, the two cannot be spiritually divorced. Our words are meaningless if they are not reflected in our life. Whatever we proclaim has to be deeply embedded into our life. If someone just has a very casual relationship with Christ, then what they communicate to someone will probably not be effective at all. What God desires of the believer’s life will always make demands on their life. So, this word is much more than just passing some theological information along to someone. It speaks of the individual having an intimate knowledge of God’s saving purposes, and therefore being able to share that knowledge with confidence, grace, and boldness.

## **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Strong, 1087.

<sup>2</sup> Zodhiates, 597.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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