

**Remember who you are!**  
**The covenant people of God**

**Intro:** In our study of 1 Peter, we have seen that Peter's overarching theme in the first section is the identity of God's people. He does not want them to forget who they are! Therefore He communicates that through a series of "you are" statements.

**In the introduction he addresses them as those who are selected by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, submissive to Jesus and sprinkled with His blood.**

**He then reminds them that they are the family of God with both wonderful blessings and attendant responsibilities.**

**Last week we noticed that in chapter two Peter continues this theme with a series of "you are" statements.**

*"You are as living stones being built up as a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God." In other words, the church is the true temple of God of which the OT temple was a shadow.*

*Tonight let's focus our attention on another series of "you are" statements."*

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet. 2:9-10)*

**Peter sees the NT church as the fulfillment of the OT economy. First, they are the true temple of God. Second, they are the true covenant people of God.**

**Christians are the true covenant people of God.**

**Today people continue to believe that the physical Jews are the "chosen people" and that as Jews they are saved in that relationship; but Peter as a Jew (so no one can call him "anti-Semitic") makes it clear that God's new covenant people are those who have put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and not those who have rejected Him.**

**Peter with prophetic insight uses the words of Isaiah and the Psalms to contrast two groups, one of which trusts in the stone that God has laid in Zion and the other which has stumbled over that stone. Listen to his explanation:**

*For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed." This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone," and, "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense;" for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. (1 Pet. 2:6-9)*

The "stone" in Peter's analogy is Jesus Christ. He becomes to those who believe in Him a sure hope of salvation; but he becomes to those who disbelieve as a stumbling block over which to fall to their doom. Peter is also very clear about the destiny of those two groups.

Those who believe in Jesus *"will not be disappointed."*

But those who disbelieve are headed for eternal *"doom,"* which God had also foreseen.

**Consequently Peter takes the language spoken to God's old covenant people and makes a new application of it to the church.**

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Pet. 2:9)*

Those Jews who read Peter's description of the church should immediately recognize these words as the words God had spoken to Israel when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, brought them to Mt. Sinai, and offered His covenant to them.

*'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Ex. 19:5-6)*

*For 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. (Deut. 7:6)*

By accepting the terms of the new covenant of Christ, we become the new covenant people of God, the new Israel of God, His chosen people.

**God's "you are" statements help us understand our identity as God's new covenant people (Who we are)**

***You are a chosen generation***

Here in this section the emphasis is probably on the adjectives rather than the collective nouns (though the noun is not without significance).

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, ...who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet. 1:1)*

Just as God had in His sovereignty chosen Israel as the people through whom to accomplish His redemptive purposes, so now He has chosen those who believe in Jesus to be the redeemed community.

This is not the unconditional election of Calvinism or Reformed theology.

It is a statement of God's divine purpose to save all who believe in Jesus before His coming to earth.

***You are a royal priesthood***

Just as Israel was called "a kingdom of priests" so God's new covenant people are "a royal priesthood."

Our high priest, Jesus is himself both king and priest. And in Him we are likewise both kings and priests.

As God's children we sit in heavenly places and reign with Jesus.

*and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, (Eph. 2:6)*

*For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)*

As God's priests we serve in the heavenly tabernacle, offering up the spiritual sacrifices we talked about last week.

### ***You are a holy nation***

As we discovered in our study of chapter 1, we are separated or consecrated to God by the sanctification of the Spirit (v. 1-2). As a result we are to:

*... like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; (1 Peter 1:15)*

That holiness is lived out not by observing the ceremonial laws of the OT, but rather by imitating the character of God as manifested in His Son, Jesus Christ.

### ***You are a people for God's own possession***

The Greek term conveys the idea of what is possessed as one's own. It is explained in God's original statement to Israel:

*'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; (Ex. 19:5-6)*

As Creator, every created person and thing belongs to God already; but to be a member of the covenant community is to belong to God in a special sense. This possession was made possible through the ransom of Jesus' sacrifice for us.

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)*

### ***You are God's people***

The first covenant was a covenant of law requiring complete and continuous obedience to maintain righteousness. Israel became unfaithful to the covenant and forfeited the covenantal blessings. As a result Hosea announced God's rejection of them as His people and their judgment by the Assyrians. He instructed Hosea to name one of His children "Lo ammi" (not my people, indicating that He had rejected Israel because of their sins.)

But even in the midst of this oracle of judgment, Hosea spoke of a day to come when God would make Israel His people again.

*Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; And it will come*

*about that, in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." (Hos. 1:10)*

Peter shows us that that promise is fulfilled not merely in the physical nation of Israel, but in the church, made up of both Jews and Gentiles. They are the new covenant people of God:

*for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; (1 Pet. 2:10)*

***You are recipients of God's mercy.***

Hosea also proclaimed that God would no show compassion on the northern kingdom because of their rebellion. Again Hosea named another "lo ruhammah" (no compassion) indicated God's removal of mercy from them; but a day would come in which He would once more show compassion upon them.

*But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen." (Hos. 1:7)*

Hosea's prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ. We have received the mercy of God in His forgiveness.

*you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet. 2:10)*

These are our covenant blessings; but we too have a covenantal responsibility.

**God's "you are" statements help us understand our mission as God's new covenant people (What we do)**

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9)*

We are unique in our mission. We exist not to boast to the world that we are God's and nobody else is, but rather to proclaim His excellencies so that others will want to become God's people too. We are the means God has chosen to bring people to himself!

**Applying Peter's message**

**All these statements in together tell us about how special the church is to God.**

**Remember who we are!**

When Peter failed the Lord harmless servants intimidated him into denying who he was! Peter had learned his lesson and he didn't want any of us to make that mistake. Never be ashamed of who you are in Christ! We are the new covenant people of God, the new Israel called out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of His truth! If only we could keep remembering who we are!

**Live out God's description.**

Recognize God's choice of us with humility and gratitude.

Appreciate our position in God's kingdom and offer up the spiritual sacrifices day by day.

Cultivate that holy character like God.

Affirm your special relationship to God among all God's creation.

**Carry out our mission to proclaim His excellencies.**

By worship

By evangelism

**Conclusion: How do we become a part of these people of God?**

First we must recognize the precious value of Jesus.

Second we must come to Him!

If you are not a Christian, you can be a part of God's new covenant people with the most precious promise: "they sins and their iniquities I will remember no more."

He want you to be included. "He that believes in Him shall never be disappointed!"