

As some of the best berries grow on the sharpest thorns, so some of the sweetest consolations of the Gospel grow on the most stinging affliction. —De Witt Talmage

Spurgeon's Catechism
Compiled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon
[1834 -1892]

"Heir of the Puritans" (*Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church*)

13.Q. Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God, (Eccl. 7:29) by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6-8).

14.Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God (1 Jn. 3:4).

15.Q. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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A PECULIAR PEOPLE INDEED

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

The divine distinction and separation of the Lord's people is noted and noticed in the spiritual identity given them in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is the aim of the Apostle here that those to whom he wrote, and we who follow, might fully realize, and experience the fact of who we truly are and that we might manifest the evidence of Christ in us, “the hope of glory.”

It is well known that Peter wrote to a persecuted and suffering people but a people he would identify as being a special people indeed to the Lord. It is encouraging to notice that he began the epistle with a powerful declaration regarding divine choice, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the subsequent obedience by the blood of Christ. He went on to address the matter of their suffering with the assurance of the fact that the Lord was in attendance and that their faith was being proven as genuine and that it would come to “praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Having laid the foundation of salvation and life by the grace of God, he would further assure them by causing them to see the evidence of their “Being born again” in their own actions. He then leads them to consider the stark contrast between those who see the Lord as precious and those to whom He is a stumbling block.

We often speak of separation and are given to think in terms of moral excellence with men.

Peter leads us to see true separation from the world as being as distinct as light and darkness, as death and life. The distinction that the Lord gives to His people is a spiritual work. The distinction is like nothing men can produce in themselves. It is the creation of Christ in His people making them a peculiar people indeed. It is here that we encounter again the ubiquitous “but” in his encouragement to them followed by four distinguishing truths about them. May we see this as being about us who read this as well. Each of these things deserve deep consideration and together they portray a composite picture of who we are in Christ.

The first distinction is that of being a “Chosen Generation.” This is not a reference to a time. Neither is it simply characterized by a behavior such as a younger generation versus an older generation. Sovereignly chosen, to be sure, but not without purpose. Obedience in the objects is clearly in view (1 Peter 1:2). We remember also: *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (Ephesians 1:4)*. The word generation means a people with a common source or origin, having a common ancestry, and thus having a family relationship of which they are conscious.

Then they are called a “Royal Priesthood.” Here we defer to the regal nature of Him with whom we have to do and the office to which we are called. In that we are in Him and He in us, we are so in every aspect of His being. Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek who was a King and a Priest and so then are we. It is to be noted that we are seated as to this position and office: *And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:6).* Perhaps we should give more thought to our functioning in this role (think of intercession for others, and the declaration of the Gospel).

As a “Holy Nation” we are to see ourselves as a people submitted to a common government to which we are devoted and are subject to common rules by which we are gladly defined. Of the United States we have often heard it said that “we are a nation of laws.” We are rather a nation made righteous by the blood of Christ and so we have our identity under our King.

In the preceding distinctions we see ourselves in a somewhat collective manner. Certainly, we are all these things as individuals and rejoice to be so. There may be something of a summary thought here in referring to us as a “Peculiar People.” The usual understanding of this word is to have unique and distinctly different characteristics is not lost on us here. But looking further into the definition we see, “Of or pertaining to” in respect to a particular possessor – that is the Lord. A. T. Robertson translated this as “A people for God’s own possession.” Kenneth Wuest, another Greek Scholar, wrote that the word means “to make something and then surround it with a circle so that the circle completely monopolizes that

which is enclosed. Wuest also wrote: “Each saint is God’s unique possession just as if that saint were the only human being in existence.”

The Lord declared through Isaiah, *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. (Isaiah 43:21).* That “ye should show forth the praises of Him...” is not a clause declaring purpose. The word “that” here is of enabling in the matters pertaining to the distinctions listed. It is that as these we are fitted up and qualified to proclaim the virtues and excellencies of Christ our Lord. The daughters of Jerusalem asked her, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” Her answer should be ours, “...yea He is altogether lovely, this is my beloved and this is my friend.” (Song 5:19, 16). It is that we are enabled to echo the words of the Father in that it is He “...in Whom I am well pleased.” We are enabled in these distinctions to declare the magnificence of His person, the magnitude of His work, and the wonders of His glory. And to do so with our lives giving voice to His praise.

It is He who has called us. This calling is not with a feeble effort or plea; it is the order of a sovereign enabling Lord. We consider this experience as a translation: *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: (Colossians 1:13-14).*

We were not a people, having no standing or significance to God in the world, and have been given standing in being a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people. *bhs*

And this is his invitation to us, as well, today: to cultivate habits of withdrawing to hear from God and respond in prayer, and then of returning, with our hearts and minds renewed, to echo the heart of Christ in acts of love toward those he has put along our path. –David Mathis, *Rich Wounds*

Jonathan Edwards spoke of union with Christ like this: “By virtue of the believer’s union with Christ, he does in fact possess all things. But it may be asked, how does he possess all things? What is he the better for it? How is a true Christian so much richer than other people? To answer this, I’ll tell you what I mean by “possessing all things.” I mean that God three in one, all that he is, and all that he has, and all that he does, all that he has made or done—the whole universe, bodies and spirits, earth and heaven, angels, humans and devils, sun, moon and stars, land and sea, fish and fowls, all silver and gold, kings and potentates—are as much the Christian’s as the money in his pocket, the clothes he wears, the house he dwells in, or the victuals he eats; yes, properly his, advantageously his, by virtue of the union with Christ; because Christ, who certainly does possess all things, is entirely his: so that the Christian possesses it all, more than a wife the share of the best and dearest husband, more than the hand possesses what the head does. It is all his. Every atom in the universe is managed by Christ so as to be most to the advantage of the Christian, every particle of air or every ray of the sun; so that he in the other world, when he comes to see it, shall sit and enjoy all this vast inheritance with surprising, amazing joy.”

Through no activity of your own, but by the sheer and mighty grace of God, you have been enveloped in the triumphant and tender ruler of the cosmos. Therefore: nothing can touch you that does not touch him. To get to you, every pain, every assault, every disappointment has to go through him. You are shielded by invincible love. Everything that washes into your life, no matter how hard, comes from and through the tender care of the friend of sinners. He himself feels your anguish even more deeply than you do, because you’re one with him; and he mediates everything hard in your life through his love for you, because you’re one with him. Picture yourself standing in a circle with an invisible but impenetrable wall surrounding you, a sphere of impregnability. But it’s not a circle you’re in. It’s a person—the person. The one before whom John fell down as he grappled for words to describe what he was looking at as one whose “eyes were like a flame of fire . . . and his voice was like the roar of many waters” (Rev. 1:14–15) has been made one with you. The might of heaven, the power that flung galaxies into existence, has swept you into himself. —Dane Ortlund, *Deeper*

“The Lord Jesus received is holiness begun; the Lord Jesus cherished is holiness advancing; the Lord Jesus counted upon as never absent would be holiness complete . . . “He is most holy who has most of Christ within, and joys most fully in the finished work. It is defective faith which clogs the feet and causes many a fall.”

--Hudson Taylor

“But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One.” As I read, I saw it all! “If we believe not, he abideth faithful.” I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed!) that He had said, “I will never leave thee.”

--Hudson Taylor