

## **1897- NIV- 1 Peter 2:9      YOUR IDENTITY!**

We live in an age when some people do **not know** their **identity** - who M & D are! Others are fussy about their **identity!** I introduced someone who was **upset** at being referred to as the **successor** to their well-known predecessor! Or the son/daughter of someone well-known person! Introducers are but trying to give the individual an **identity**, but the individual wanted **his own identity!** People **do** want to be perceived as who **THEY feel** and **think** they are! **Bad basis!**

Many want to **MAKE** their **own identity!** However, what is **important** is not who **we** think we are, but who **GOD** thinks we are! Who does **He** think we are! You may think/believe you are someone, whom you are not! But **God** gets it right every time! Here, we have **God** giving His people their identity - whatever they may think of themselves, they are whom God says they are! But.....

### **WE OUGHT BE CERTAIN ABOUT OUR IDENTITY**

**Listen** to God's Son re His identity: *I know where I came from and where I am going* [John 8:14]. Listen to the **Psalmist** *we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care* [Psa 95:7]. Listen to Paul say about himself and the Roman Xns *we are God's children and whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord* [Rom 8:16+14:8] Paul also said to the Phil *we who are the circumcision... who worship by the Spirit of God* [Phil 3:3]!

In **prayer**, the OT Church was able to say ***Doubtless You are our Father, Though Abraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father; Our Redeemer*** [Isa 63:16 NJKV]! God's people **ought** to be able to identify themselves as His children! We **ought** constantly to be able to give thanks to God for His **covenant love** to us! Especially at communion time!!

Yet, it seems this is the very point Peter is trying to make here. He is **contrasting** his readers with those who have **stumbled over Christ** - trying to **assure** the **God's elect** [1:1], no less, who they are ***you are a chosen people*** - make no mistake about it, you are **special**, that is, special in **God's eyes** – you may not be special to anybody else, but

**you are** very special to God! **APP** If someone asked you Xn brother/sister 'Who are you?', what would you say? Would **you** say, 'I belong to God? He has **chosen** me as His **special treasure**'? If you are a believer, and you did not reply like that, God would be disappointed with you! Just as a parent would be disappointed at his child not owning him or her as father or mother, God would '**behurt**' for He is **tender-hearted** – especially regarding His own. He even calls sinners saved by grace, the *apple of His eye*! [Zech 2:8]!

## The CONTEXT

The previous verses to our text, talk about the **central figure in all of life** – Jesus Christ! They depict Him as **either a blessing or a curse** to humanity! Christ is either the **capstone** of people's lives (the main 'holding-together' piece) or He is a Stone/Rock that **causes** people to **stumble**, *a rock that makes them fall* [8b]! **APP** X is either a **blessing** or a **curse** to you! He either **makes** you or **breaks** you? He either keeps your life together, or He breaks you down!

We are **constantly confronted** with Jesus in our lives! We meet Him at every turn – His Word challenges us 24/7 - in every crisis, in every situation! Jesus perpetually reminds us of the **moral** and **spiritual** aspect of life - and calls us to **duty**- to do the **right** things every time!

Jesus, actually gives us **identity**! Our **relationship** to Jesus Christ **defines** us! He gives us our real **personality**. It is *In Him we have redemption...forgiveness...the riches of God's grace* [Eph1] Paul's desire was to *be found in Him* [Phi 3:9 John: *abide in Him* [1J2:28]

**APP** Our **Government** believes that the best way to stop evil (terrorism, drugs, child-abuse) is to issue **Identity Cards**! But the best way, and by far the **cheapest** way to stop evil, is to **convert** people to Christ!! It is Christ that gives us identity – it is X that makes us **better** people. In fact we are so much better 'in Christ', the Bible calls us *new creatures*! The Government's Identity Cards is to **list** all your **offences** and examine your **past life** and loyalty to the State – it is really to see are you **worthy** of a good and clean Identity Card! **Contrast** X's Identity Card - it is to **assure you** that you **have been chosen** by God **DESPITE** your **past life** and **sins**!

The context here talks of Jesus Christ being the One Special Chosen Person who is precious to God. And that those who believe in Him (ie, are **identified** with Him) *will never be put to shame* [6] There are those of course who do not believe in Him *they disobey the Word* ESV [8] Peter makes the point that **some believe and some do not!**

## **BEING CHOSEN**

But it is **not** just the **One living Stone** that has been chosen! Peter says there is a whole 'race, nation, generation' who have been chosen. Peter here talks about **people being chosen** as well. He gives an **illustration** from his time. In Peter's day, builders had to **choose** stones from among a **pile!** **Unlike** today's builders where each brick/block is **pre-cut** to a certain size, and all are the **same**, builders then, had to **select** the one **suitable** for the **particular place** it would occupy in the building. Peter is illustrating how Christ is like a capstone, which exactly fits and **unites** all the other stones together and becomes the **central** stone in building. Take it away and it falls!

Peter (God), is saying that **it is the same** with people **who believe** – they have been **chosen by God** because they are **precious to God!** ...*you* [plural] *are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God* (you belong to Him!). How wonderful! Peter is **reminding/assuring** them and us, it is **no accident** that you believe in Him – because you were **chosen**.

Yes, **chosen to believe!** The Scriptures mention this matter of being chosen or elected a lot, because there is a **tendency to pride** – even among God's people in the matter of being a Xn! The Bible makes abundantly clear, there is no room for boasting of any kind in God's kingdom! *What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?* [1Cor 4:7]

## **GOD'S PERCEPTION of His CHOSEN**

Peter is writing to **encourage** and assure his readers who are being **persecuted** for their faith, that they **are really special** in **God's** eyes. God sees them as *a royal priesthood* ! Royalty and priesthood are at the **top** of the human ladder in **every culture**. It is **God's Word** that

calls Xns royal priests. Christ *has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father* [Rev 1:6]! Whatever you **feel**, God sees you as kings/priests, possessing a **special dignity** as far as He is concerned!

Royalty have a **special honour!** *the honour is for you who believe!* [ESV 2:7] It is a great honour to be a believer! God is honouring all those who believe in Him. We ought to recognise that honour!

You are a *a holy nation*. Not just **individuals**, you are **united** group of believers. **Individualistic** Xnity is an **absurdity** – Xnity is a **community, a fellowship**. Xns are *being joined together...and built together to become a dwelling in which God lives* [Eph 2:20-22] Rick Warren= “put together, joined together, built together, members together, heirs together, fitted together, held together, and will be caught up together”!

What other ‘Club’ **stipulates** the condition of **membership** to include this: that we **love** each other, **pray** for each other, **encourage** each other, **admonish** each other, **welcome** each other, **serve** each other, **teach** each other, **accept** each other, **honour** each other, **carry** each other’s burdens, **forgive** each other, **submit** to each other, be **devoted** to each other – and spend **eternity together**? No Sport’s Club or Health Club!! Do you realize that **real maturity** shows up in **relationships** – not individualism! Indivd. product of Enlightenment!

Today, many people in our culture, do **not** feel a sense of **belonging** – they feel isolated. Many feel an ‘**emptiness**’ – they are of no purpose or value. This is due to the teaching that we are not created by God for a purpose. The bottom line is, they have **no identity!**

**Chosen for what purpose?** To *declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light* You/I are to **commend** God. Your **whole life** is to be a **testimony** to God’s goodness. People are to ‘learn’ from **you** that God is wonderful. They ought to get the **impression**, after being with you/I, that there is **no one** as good as God! All the heroes in [Heb 11] by their lives of faith **declare plainly** that God is a wonderful God – He is **worth dying for!** \*We have the **opportunity tomorrow** to declare His praises by **remembering His death!** *As often as you...shew the Lord’s death*