

Exodus 19:2-8 ² They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, ³ while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured

possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.” ⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

I greet you with, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, and empowering us.

In the lesson from Exodus we have the children of Israel after being delivered from Egypt. They come to Mt Sinai and God speaks to Moses, and continues and expands the covenant given to Abraham some 600 years earlier. There is divine blessing with the obedience of faith, as is today. They covenant with God. Sadly they did not heed the Lord’s warning, and wandered for forty years, may we heed the call today.

In the verses from Exodus God makes a covenant with the people of Israel, saying, “⁵ **Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.**” (Exodus 19:5-6 ESV) This is the same covenant that God makes with all believers. In fact, the Holy Spirit through Peter uses the same kind of language, quoting from this passage and applying the covenant to believers. The Holy Spirit says through Peter “⁹ **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**” (1 Peter 2:9 ESV) You are chosen, a treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Those three declarations, chosen, kingdom of priests and a holy nation grant from your creator, identity, and purpose. Your status is defined by your creator chosen for the divine purpose of being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. We are looking at what it means to be chosen by God, and what is this purpose a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Treasured Possession – Chosen

The idea of the words, ‘treasured possession’ as in our lesson from Exodus and the ‘own possession’ from 1st Peter means ‘to purchase, to acquire for a price.’ God has purchased you, ransomed you, redeemed you.

In 1st Corinthians 6 it says, “¹⁹...you are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19b-20 ESV) You see, you belong to Jesus, live in holiness. Peter wrote of the same in 1st Peter 1 saying, “¹⁸ ... you were ransomed....¹⁹ ... with the precious blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV) It is the precious death of Jesus who paid the penalty for sin. All who believe or trust in Him will be saved. We belong to Him. We are chosen by Him. Jesus said to his disciples in John 15, and by extension to all believers, saying, “¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.” (John 15:16 ESV) We are chosen, elected by a sovereign act of God. Paul told the Ephesians , “⁴ ...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love⁵ he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,” (Ephesians 1:3-5 ESV) and Paul in 2nd Timothy, “⁸...God,⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,” (2 Tim. 1:8b-9 ESV) As a believer you are chosen by God, called not because of merit, or works, but by grace. God desires that all would be saved, (1 Tim 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9). May you hear and receive the saving grace that God offers, being chosen.

Kingdom of Priests – A Royal Priesthood

As believers we are also called to be a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood as Peter describes this calling. Royal denotes belonging to the household of the king, the royal house. A priest serves the king and has access to him. As believers we can approach the throne of grace freely, not being barred from His presence, all because of Christ. Jesus is the king of a kingdom, sovereign of the universe, the new heavens and earth yet to come. (2 Peter 3:13) This is His everlasting Kingdom that has no end. John the apostle in Revelation, wrote, “⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6 ESV) We will be reigning with Christ.

A Holy Nation

We are also called a holy nation. Holy means ‘separate’ or “to set apart”, and can refer to places of worship in scripture like the tabernacle or temple, things and persons related to those holy places. It is holy communion, holy baptism, holy Bible or holy word. It also refers to a quality of perfection, and a characteristic of God. God is Holy. Believers are called saints, the holy ones, sanctified by Christ. There is a sanctification or holiness in salvation. Even though our glorification waits till heaven when we are perfect in every way, right now those who belong to Jesus, are saved, redeemed, declared holy. For example, in 1st

Corinthians 6 it says, “¹¹ **And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.** (1 Cor. 6:11 ESV) and in 2nd Corinthians 5, “¹⁷ **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** (2 Cor. 5:17 ESV) Even though this is accomplished in salvation, we are urged in our Christian living to live the reality of our salvation, which is in godly living that happens as the Holy Spirit works through the word. For example, Peter declares in 2nd Peter 3, “¹¹ **Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,**” (2 Peter 3:11 ESV) Paul in Ephesians and “²⁴ **and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**” (Ephes. 4:24 ESV), and to the Thessalonians, “⁴ **that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor... ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.**” (1 Thes. 4:4,7 ESV) and in Hebrews 12, “¹⁴ **Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.**” (Hebrews 12:14 ESV) This is our calling as Christian people to live in holiness as the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of good works in our lives, resisting evil, living as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation reaching out to others with the saving gospel.

Christ is Faithful

Just like in the days of Moses, God presents his blessings upon those who follow Him, living in obedience, being imitators of God through the Holy Spirit. It is not our abilities but the faithfulness of Christ who does through us. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “²⁴ **He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**” (1 Thes. 5:24 ESV) “³ **But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.**” (2 Thes. 3:3 ESV) We are encouraged in Hebrew 10, “²¹ **and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.**” (Heb 10 21 ESV) Draw near to Jesus through the word, as His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, living what you profess, through the Holy Spirit, as you reach the world through Christ. May God grant this to us all

In His name we pray, AMEN May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.