

820 How Are Christians Chosen?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:9 that Christians are a “chosen race.” What does the Bible mean by that and how are Christians chosen? Does that mean there is something special about them? You may not realize it, but God is searching to find people who will love and serve Him. One of my favorite passages in the Bible is 2 Chronicles 16:9; there the prophet says, “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” God is searching for believers who will set their hearts on serving Him so that He may strongly support them. I hope you have that kind of love for God.

The Bible says to the church in 1 Peter 2:9-10, “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. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” In God’s eyes those who believe in Christ and live the Christian life are indeed special. They are a chosen race, a royal priesthood—they are both kings and priests. They are a holy nation, unique and separated to the service of God.

The purpose of the church is to proclaim the excellencies of God. My friend, the God of the Bible is the God who created the heavens and the earth. He is the God who created you. And there is no one like Him in wisdom and power and in glory. We have been chosen for salvation, yes; but we also have an obligation to help people see the difference between the God of heaven and every other religious belief. We are to show that the way of God is better than the way of man, that God is certainly better than idols, that God is holy and above all.

The apostle Peter told the Christians that there was once a time when we were “not a people”; that is, a time when we were nobodies. We weren’t important in this world, as some people count importance. But now we are the people of God. These phrases come out of the Biblical story of Hosea with his adulterous wife Gomer. God told Hosea to marry a prostitute, and Hosea married Gomer. She bore children that were legally Hosea’s; but since she had returned to prostitution after their marriage, it is unknown who the physical father was. A son’s name was Lo-ammi, “Not my people”; and a daughter’s name was Lo-ruhama, which means “no mercy.” But the time came when Hosea redeemed Gomer accepted these children and their names were changed.

You and I at one time were nobodies, spiritually speaking. We were not saved and we did not have the promise of God. But when the blood of Jesus cleansed us and redeemed us from sin, we became children of God, we became somebody in the eyes of God. We became His “people.” We were saved from sin, saved from the world. The Bible says about God in Colossians 1:13-14, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” God has rescued us from a lost and dying world and put us into His kingdom, where His love and promises are. How thankful all of us ought to be for what God has done for us!

Through the ages God has chosen special people to do special things. For instance, the Bible says in Genesis 6:5-8: The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

How sad that the whole world had become so wicked; every thought and intention was only evil continually. Of course this grieved God to His heart. God did not make people to live wicked lives and think up evil. God did not make us to be immoral and to violate His will. God created people to live in love and goodness and to maintain fellowship with Him. He wanted our lives to be holy, just as He is holy. Looking at the overwhelmingly evil world, God determined to wipe it clean. But Noah found favor in God’s eyes, and God started over with Noah and his family. I’m glad God did, because you and I wouldn’t be here otherwise.

Next, God called Abraham at the age of 75 to be the father of many nations. Have you ever wondered why He called Abraham, who had grown up with a family that believed in idols? The Bible tells us in Genesis 18:19, “For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.” God called Abraham, because He knew what kind of father Abraham would be. The father of many nations has first of all to be a father who will rightly train his children in righteousness. The greatest need in America today is the need for Christian fathers who will spiritually train their children to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

God also chose Israel as a holy nation. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 7:6-8, “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Israel was a theocracy; that means that God Himself was its king in the beginning. They were indeed His treasured possession, but the history of Israel has shown they have not always held to the Lord.

Among the Israelites, God chose the Levites as His priests. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 21:5, “Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and by their word every dispute and every assault shall be settled.” The priests had three functions. First, they were to serve in the tabernacle for the worship of God. Second, they were to be teachers of the Law in Israel to keep the people informed. Third, they were authorities on the Law to settle disputes between the people. God gave them a special role and place in Israel.

So, we might now ask how God chooses us today. First God calls us. The Bible says in Acts 2:38-41: And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. God’s calling to us today is through the preaching of the gospel. God calls us to faith in Jesus Christ, to repentance of our sins, and to baptism into Christ.

God calls us through the message of the gospel, through the preaching of God’s Word found in the Bible. The apostle Paul told the church in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15, “But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the

Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” We are called by the gospel and are chosen when we respond to that gospel.

You remember that the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 22:14, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Many people hear the gospel and are called to come to Jesus, but not everyone responds. Some live their lives in rebellion. The apostle John wrote in John 1:11-13, “He [Jesus] came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” You might hear the word; but unless you are willing to believe and obey it, the Word will not be able to help you.

Our Lord Jesus said in John 6:44-45, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.” It is not enough to say, “I have a Bible.” Unless you dig into that Bible and learn what God says, you are missing out on the good God’s Word can do in your life. The Bible can call you; but unless you respond to its call and are obedient, you cannot become one of the chosen. Jesus said in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” To have eternal life, you must believe and heed the message.

The Bible further says in John 3:36, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” It takes more than mere belief to please God; one must also obey. The apostle John observed in John 12:42-43, “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” Faith alone is not enough to please God. Those who say “all you have to do is believe to be saved,” are missing the mark. Faith expresses itself through obedience to the gospel call. Those who say “faith alone” is enough almost always have to take it back, because the Bible also teaches the necessity of love, repentance, and baptism for salvation.

I am reminded of what the Bible says in Isaiah 1:18-20: “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken. God has always expected people to consent and obey, to give their lives and their hearts to God in love and in compliance to His will.

God won’t bless rebellion or refusal. That’s why we need to come to God.

What does it mean to be chosen? It means that you have heard God’s calling and have responded to it in obedience. It means you have been washed in the blood of Jesus, freed from sin. It means that you are a child of God and have been added to the Lord’s church. The apostle John wrote by inspiration in Revelation 22:14, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.” In Revelation 7:14 the Bible says that the robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb, the blood of Jesus Christ. Are your robes washed in His blood? Are you right with God?

The Book of Ephesians in chapter two provides a stark contrast between those who are chosen in Christ, and those who are yet in the world. The old way of life is in Ephesians 2:11-12” Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” What a dismal existence—no hope and without God. God does not offer any hope who to those who are strangers to the covenants of promise. Then comes the important change: Ephesians 2:13 says, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” You see, the blood of Christ makes all the difference. Once one is clean by the blood, he becomes “chosen by God.” Ephesians 2:18-22 says, “For through him [Jesus} we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” What a blessing to be a Christian, to be in God’s family, a citizen of God’s kingdom! No honor, no blessing is higher and nobler than this.

So...when do we come into contact with the blood of Jesus? The Bible says in Romans 6:3-7, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.” When upon faith, repentance, and confession you are baptized, the blood washes away your sins, and you are then in God’s family. Don’t you want to be saved, to be clean, to be one of the chosen in God’s family today?

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