

Studies in I Peter (31)

The Privileges of Salvation -- The Believer Has Them All!

Introduction

- A. Because of our fallen and sinful condition the believer has a tendency to overemphasize the physical and the here-and-now. This profound error causes great deception and harm.
- B. While a gift of a million dollars would transform most of us, as least in how we think and live, the great benefits of salvation rarely cause us to think and live differently.
- C. Every believer has been given all the benefits of salvation (Ephesians 1:3; II Peter 1:3). We possess them all - legally. We must learn how to use them by faith and love in order to receive the joy and power of these benefits in daily life.
- D. The text:

But ye are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people belonging to God, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. I Peter 2:9

I. The Believer's Relationship -- "A chosen people"

- A. Because of the terrible effects of sin -- a threefold provision had to be made for anyone to be saved.
 - 1. An objective work in history -- the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.
Romans 5:8,9
 - 2. A subjective work in the person -- the new birth. John 3:3,5
 - 3. A choice by God as to whom to give the gift -- divine election.
Ephesians 1:3-5
- B. The believer is therefore described as among "chosen people." We are not believers because of our good works -- but only because of the grace of God. It was His gift of grace/life that led us to Himself. Romans 6:23
- C. There is no assurance of salvation (election) without the evidence of true (spiritual) obedience. Note in I Peter 1:2 how it is said we are "Elect ... unto obedience...." The Lord Jesus said only those who did the will of God would go to heaven (Matthew 7:21).
- D. We must give thanks to God each day for His mercy and live out our gratitude in worship, obedience, and service.

II. The Believer's Office -- "A royal priesthood"

- A. A priest is one to whom God has given the ability, the right, and the responsibility of representing Him. Every believer can bring the Word and grace of God to others -- and bring anyone into the presence of God through intercession. Note I Peter 4:10; James 5:16

- B. The word "royal" is used in this designation to emphasize the privilege associated with our priesthood. Every believer has been made a priest by God Himself and invited to serve in that capacity in all areas of life. We would be greatly honored to be given a high governmental post but somehow this greater privilege rarely creates interest among us.
- C. We must recognize and confess our lethargy for the sin that it is. And we must obey God daily and learn to serve as His priest.

III. The Believer's Character -- "Holy nation"

- A. The basic meaning of the word "holy" is that of separation, i.e., to divide from the sinful and unite as "separate" unto God.
- B. The word has three emphases when applied to the believer.
 1. We are forgiven and our spirit made holy, Col 2:13; Heb 10:10,
 2. We are united to God, 2 Cor 6:16, and
 3. We are told to be a holy person in attitude and action, 2 Cor 7:1.

Peter's emphasis here is on the first and second. The believer has been set free from the guilt and power of sin and united to God.
- C. How easy it is for us to live out of harmony with who and what we really are. God has made us holy and yet too often we prefer to live otherwise.

IV. The Believer's Worth -- "A people belonging to God"

- A. In this designation we are described as God's possession -- as being valuable to Him. It is interesting and encouraging to see how the Christian is spoken of as "God's inheritance" in the Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:20; Ephesians 1:18). This means that we are valuable to Him and He enjoys us.
- B. Most believers have difficulty accepting this truth. Because of our failures and our tendency to be lethargic in spiritual matters -- it is easier to believe error and to think of ourselves as worthless.
- C. When we do not believe God and learn to live as "belonging to God" we will live as "belonging to ourselves." That will make success in the Christian life impossible.

V. The Believer's Calling -- "Show forth the praises of Him"

- A. The reference to "call" in this verse indicates the eternal purpose God had in mind in our creation and salvation. We have been given the privilege, not only to enjoy, but to glorify God.
- B. We fulfill our calling by putting the Bible into practice in our daily life. We are taught that our "good works" (Matthew 5:16); "thanksgiving" (Luke 17:14-16); "acts of righteousness" (Philippians 1:11); and all forms of "ministry" (I Peter 4:11) -- will glorify God.
- C. We must accept our calling. God has made the provision so we can show forth His praise in every area of life. This calls for prayerful concern and obedience. There is nothing more important than living so we cause people to think of God.

