

Weekly Scripture and Sermon Study: History & Context Guide
1 Peter 2:9-10 “A Chosen People”

History, Culture, & Context

1 Peter is addressed to the Christian community facing persecution in Asia Minor. It was written to express encouragement in the face of hardship and to remain faithful to God.

In verse 9, we read: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” These metaphors are seen throughout the Old Testament to highlight that the Israelites are a covenant people who have a special relationship with God. Here, Peter is employing these terms to describe the Christian church. Through Christ, the church is now a *chosen people*, a *royal priesthood*, a *holy nation*, *God’s special possession* and a *people of God*. (See Deuteronomy 10:15; 14:2; Psalms 33:12; Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 43:20-21).

The term “chosen people” is key here and comes from the Greek word *genos*, which means kindred, family or offspring. In this context, it is referring to a new “family” or “kindred” in Christ. Similar language is used in Deuteronomy 7:6, “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.” It is interesting to note that we also see this as part of the three-step process of conversion summarized in Revelation 17:14: “...and with him will be his *called*, *chosen* and *faithful* followers.” This process demonstrates that Christians are a part of God’s family, becoming brothers and sisters with one another.

According to the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, regarding the line: *out of darkness and into his wonderful light*, “If the tradition is this early, during the Passover celebration some Jewish people described their deliverance from Egypt as a call “from darkness into great light.”

In verse 10, we read: “Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” Compare this with Hosea 1:9; 2:23. The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible explains, “Peter cites Hosea 1:10; 2:23, which reverse God’s earlier verdict against Israel (Hosea 1:6; 8-9), promising the ultimate restoration of God’s people.” It further explains, “Like Paul, Peter believes that Gentile followers of Israel’s true king become part of this restored people of God (Romans 9:24-26; Isaiah 19:24-25; 56:3-8).”



From: <https://www.bible.com/bible/1/1PE.2.9-10.KJV>

Questions to Consider

1. What does it mean for us as Christians to be chosen by God? How should we internalize this and live our lives to reflect this?
2. What are some characteristics that mark us as a “chosen people”?
3. How does the term “chosen people” differ in the Old Testament, compared to the New Testament?