

because we belong to God, which sounds like a contradiction. If we are free whilst belonging to God, we can be free whilst also being a servant or slave.

Again there can be a point where we have to obey God rather than men, but otherwise, we obey God by being subject to human authority, whether that be the Emperor, an employer or a master.

18. Our motivation is to imitate our Saviour. Our goal is to please God (implied in verse 20).

19. Verse 19 - Christ suffered for YOU

Verse 24 - He bore YOUR sins in His body

- that WE might die to sin and live to righteousness
- by his wounds YOU have been healed.

Verse 25 - YOU were like sheep going astray but have now returned to the Shepherd.

Praise God.

*David Phillips,
September 2016*

The First letter of Peter

LEADERS NOTES

Week 5 (1 Pt 2.9-25)

There is quite a bit about words in this study as I have focussed on three of the four terms used by Peter in verse 9 and how they are expanded upon elsewhere in the letter.

2. As we have noted before this letter of Peter contains several compound expressions where he puts together two words in a way that is mostly unique to him. The four terms are:

- chosen race (ie elect offspring)
- royal priesthood (we touched on this in the last study)
- holy nation (this does occur in Exodus 19.5 which also calls Israel a “kingdom of priests”).
- a people for his own possession (literally ‘people for possession’)

As noted we could look at the Old Testament background to these but Peter is applying them deliberately to believers (v7) and we are concentrating on what Peter says and practical instructions which he gives.

3. Elect Offspring

There is a lot behind this little phrase and I have tried to summarise the matter in the notes. The two words are the other way around in Greek.

The first is *genos* - related to the word to be born, to beget etc. So these are the children born, and as the notes try to tease out this means those who are born again. So the offspring, generation, or family are the born-again children, that is the community of believers. The ESV ‘race’ seems to me unhelpful as it is not a Biblical idea. The idea of race has particularly come to be associated with defining

differences between people whereas in the Bible *genos* has to do with being descended from someone (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob etc) ie part of their family and hence within the promises made to them.

1.1 & 1.23 both have “**born** again” in the ESV whilst 1 Pt 2.2 we are to be like new**born** infants - that is those born again.

5. The second part of the expression is the Greek ‘eklekton’ which Peter has used in 1.1 and mean ‘elect’. It is sometimes translated as “called out” and Peter makes a play on words in verse 9.

We are to “proclaim the excellences” of God, some have praises though it is not the normal Biblical word for praise and implies moral excellence.

In 2 Peter 1.3 we read that God has “**called** us to his own glory and **excellence**”

6. In 1.1 believers are called ‘elect exiles’ and this word ‘exiles’ comes in 2.11. You will see that Peter uses this to say that we should abstain from the passions of the flesh. It is not difficult to see how this is very different to what most of the world around us thinks - both today and as it was in much of the ancient world.

7. Israel are called a “holy nation” in Ex 9.5 but with the coming of Christ that title belongs to those who are in Christ by election and faith.

Remember how Jesus proclaimed that kingdom of God has come, the king is God, although we can also say that Jesus is king.

8. Again Peter is not simply interested in doctrine, the truth, but with the consequences of this and again in verse 12 he is concerned that our moral conduct should be honourable and bring glory to God. Sadly our conduct often dishonouring to God.

9. The goal is to glorify God on the day of visitation which would

appear to refer to the final judgement.

10. Israel had been a sovereign state, though over the five centuries before Christ they had mostly been subject to others and at the time of Christ they were subject to Rome.

Most of the Israelites were like those who voted for Brexit, they wanted to be an independent self-governing state again.

The Jews expected the Messiah to lead them in re-establishing a sovereign state which had ended with the exile and the break of the line of Davidic kings. When Jesus came those who believed he was the Messiah were shocked that he was not going to re-establish the kingdom and most came to reject him in part because of this. In John Jesus says specifically that his kingdom is not of this world, as the thief on the cross recognised, and Matthew in particular picks up on Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom.

A Christian therefore in a sense belongs to two kingdoms, the kingdom of Christ to which we owe our primary allegiance. But Jesus and the Apostles affirmed the God-given nature of earthly kingdoms until the second coming. Peter here says the same sort of thing as Paul and Jesus (“render to Caesar” etc) that we should honour and obey earthly rulers, though not at the cost of denying our Saviour.

11-12. The goal is to be obedient to God’s will in verse 15, but also to silence ignorant and foolish people - which would seem to mean those who portrayed Christians as being disloyal to the Emperor of the Empire. This accusation of disloyalty would lead to many martyrdoms over the following centuries, including Peter himself and even Saint George.

13. In the next few verses we are seeing a very similar idea to the idea of living as Christians in the world, belonging to two kingdoms. If we belong to God, how can a Christian also be a servant or slave of a human master? But then again, if people want to be free, do they also want to be free of God?

Peter seems to be saying that in Christ we are free, but we are free