

# Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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## Who are you? What should you do?

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9–10, KJV 1900)*

Our study verses begin with "But..." Peter has just written of those Jews who stumbled in unbelief at Jesus and His coming. He has shown us the grave consequences of unbelief. Now he will remind us of who we are in Christ, and why we should steadfastly believe in Him.

...*ye are a chosen generation.* Generation suggests familial relationship. Despite these people being identified at the beginning of this letter as "...strangers scattered..." throughout five regions, Peter reminds them that they belong to one family. He doesn't tell us whether they were Jews, Gentiles, or both. That point no longer matters. Their family relationship has to do with God, not their biological family. In the closing verses of the first chapter, Peter reminds his readers that they are born again. His first point at the beginning of this chapter is "...as newborn babes..." Our study verses build on this truth. Peter regards his readers as children of God.

That Peter says they are a **chosen** generation reminds us that his readers didn't cause their family relationship, nor did the incident of their natural birth produce this relationship. They belong to this spiritual family by God's choice, not theirs.

...*a royal priesthood.* "Royal" indicates a member of the king's family. Thus the two words together point to kingly priests. God's Old Testament administration established a structure under which no priest could be king, and no king could be a priest. King Uzziah tried it, and God smote him with leprosy. (2 Chronicles 26:16-23) Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 describe New Testament saints as kings and priests, the point that Peter makes with these two words.

...*a peculiar people.* "Peculiar" can describe a person who is known by his/her eccentric qualities or behaviors. It can also refer to something or someone who uniquely belongs to a class or group. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines the word as something or someone "...That exclusively belongs or pertains to or is characteristic of an individual person or thing, or group of persons or things." Most commentaries apply this definition to the various passages that refer to God's children as "Peculiar." The common thread that binds them all together is that they all belong to God in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

...*that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*" Peter clearly identifies God's purpose in making His chosen people all of the things named. "...that ye should..." does not indicate that they all shall do these things, but it leaves no question that God has commanded them to do so. When Jesus gave the disciples the example of washing their feet, He explained the purpose of this humble—and humbling—act.

If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also **ought** to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye **should do** as I have done to you. (John 13:14-15 KJVP; emphasis added)

Scripture never leaves us in doubt as to what God has commanded us to do, what we "ought" to do, or "should" do. However, a simple observation of the various Christian fellowships or denominations makes the point quite clearly. All children of God, or, for that matter, all believers in Christ do not practice this act. Jesus teaches that we "should" do so, and He commanded us to do so in this chapter. Obedience to God's commandments is not a divinely orchestrated or sovereignly caused event. In the new birth, God endows each and every one of His children with certain spiritual abilities and inclinations. Through the conviction of the permanently indwelling Holy Spirit, through the teachings of Scripture, and through the preaching of the gospel, He commands us to obey. The Holy Spirit never—ever—leaves us wholly to ourselves. He abides with us and teaches us.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. (Titus 2:11-15 KJVP)*

Notice that the same grace that brings salvation also teaches us. When Jesus taught the parables, He often commented, *“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”* (Matthew 13:9 KJVP) He didn't say that everyone who really had spiritual ears would hear. He rather commanded, *“...let him hear.”* Even some disciples who heard Jesus preach and teach chose not to “Hear” and obey.

*From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* (John 6:66 KJVP)

Inspired Scripture specifically states that these people were disciples, not hell-bound sinners. But they chose not to “Hear” Jesus' own words.

*Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?* (John 6:60 KJVP)

Men who faithfully preach the gospel for any length of time in our day will witness the same behavior. People will believe the gospel and for a season faithfully obey, but various snares of Satan will cause them to stumble and to focus more on stormy waves than on Jesus. Like those sad disciples in John 6, they will turn back from their faith and walk no more with Jesus.

These people will fail to rise to the measure of their calling as defined in our study passage. They “Should” show forth His praises, but they do not. Jesus cleansed ten lepers, but only one returned to thank and worship Him for the blessing. (Luke 17:17) All ten were benefited. All ten could return to their homes and families after going to the priest and completing the cleansing ritual outlined in Moses' Law. (Leviticus 14:1-8) But only one of the ten remembered the source of His true cleansing and returned to Jesus, to *“...glorify God.”*

*...who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Scripture teaches that, prior to God's regenerating work in us, we not only lived in darkness; we **were** darkness.

*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.* (Ephesians 5:8 KJVP)

We show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light by walking, living every day of our lives *“...as children of light.”*

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul describes the *“...fruit of the Spirit.”* When we follow the Holy Spirit's conviction and teaching in our lives, we shall manifest a behavior that is characterized by the nine descriptive terms that Paul used in these verses. The Holy Spirit does not produce nine different kinds of fruit; He teaches those in whom He dwells to live a consistent life that manifests all of the nine descriptive traits that Paul names in

those verses. Notice how Paul punctuates this lesson.

*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* (Galatians 5:25 KJVP)

How do we *“...walk in the Spirit”*? Read the earlier verses in this context.

*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* (Galatians 5:13-16 KJVP)

If each of us were to reflect on each day's activities, could we honestly describe them as *“...by love...”* serving our fellow-believers? Or might we at times have to confess in shame that we practiced behaviors that more *“...bite and devour...”* our brothers and sisters in Christ? Paul's warning words compel our attention. *“...take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”* We choose how we walk. We choose what we do. At the end of the day, did we *“Walk in the Spirit,”* and manifest behaviors that are accurately described by those nine descriptive terms? Or did we *“...fulfil the lust of the flesh”*? The compelling lesson for us in all of these passages calls us to Peter's words.

*...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”*

Did you show His praises when you nit-picked what a brother or sister did? Did you show His praises when you chose to ignore the pastor's admonitions rather than submit and obey? (Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 13:7, 8, 17) Does your conduct give your pastor reason to give his account to God with grief or with joy? (Hebrews 13:17) Have you walked in dark shadows for so long that you prefer shadows over *“...marvelous light”*? If so, let me urge you to take a look at that light. Think of the changes that will flood into your life as you walk close to Him in His light. Think of the joys of those around you when you chose to do things that show forth His praises rather than your own ambitions. Until you consciously walk in that light, you can't imagine the joy that you have chosen to avoid. Isn't it time for a godly change?

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Worship service each Sunday  
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.  
Pastor