

1 Peter 2:10-11 'Sons Of The Living God!'

Last time from 1 Peter we looked at v7-9 of chapter 2: "Chosen by God", as Peter reiterated God's sovereign choice! He began the letter with this doctrine in chapter 1:2, and he states the same in chapter 2:9. He drew that line of distinction between those people of v7b-8 "who do not believe" in that "Living stone," who is the Lord Jesus Christ. And those of v7a "to those who believe this stone is precious."

Yes, those who believe that the Bible is all of, and about Jesus! To those who believe in another God, any other God, V8 speaks of what those nonbelievers "were destined" for. What their ultimate design was for. What their foreordaining was for. What their purpose by God was for! We saw that God raised up that Pharaoh for the very purpose of delivering His people out of slavery and showing His power and glory to the world. And of course, that is what only Jesus can do in relation to sin. "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." And "Pharaoh hardened his own heart." The sovereignty of God, and the accountability of man for sin working hand in hand!

V9 "but you are a chosen people." Malachi 3:18 "and you will gain see the distinction between those who serve God and those who do not." And of course that distinction line, is always, and only, Christ! Yes, "but you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation." Peter compared the priesthood of the Old Testament temples with that of the royal priesthood of believers who come through the true temple. The body of the Lord Jesus. Those things were about shadows which pointed to the reality that is found in Christ!

In Hebrews 12, we saw that the writer compares the Old Testament Mount Sinai experience, to the mountain which we've come to. That heavenly mountain which finds its reality in heaven before the very throne of God! "A chosen people a royal priesthood a holy nation a people belonging to God." So chosen and set apart as royal priests in service belonging to God. And for this purpose. "To give praises to him who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light." Yes "chosen by God," set apart as priests for holy service so that we would cry out that blessed warning, that judgement is coming. It is the "two edged sword" of Jesus' mouth, the gospel!

And so we pick up the letter in 1 Peter 2:10-11, in a sermon I have entitled "Sons Of The Living God!" Peter continues to draw this explanation of who the true people of God are, as he refers to the prophecy found in chapters one and two of the book of Hosea. Again, in v9, "but you are a chosen people." V10: "Once you were not a people." Now when Peter uses the phrase "a people" here, he means individuals who have been collectively gathered together under one authority. As a country. As a nationality! We who live in Australia are all Australians. Many of us drawn from different places around the world. Indeed, apart from Aboriginal communities, we are all indebted to others who came here at different times and carried us with them in their bodies, that we may benefit from and share in, the tremendous privileges and relative freedoms that we have in the nation of Australia. Well in the same way, drawing from Hosea chapters one and two, Peter explains, that since Christ has come, this is what has taken place and this is who we are! Those who were called God's people, (physical Israel) will no longer be called His people. And those who were "not a people," not a nation under one head and authority because they were scattered throughout the whole world, God says in Hosea, will one day be known as "the people of God."

The book of Hosea is the horrendous account of the prophet Hosea instructed by God, to marry an adulterous woman. Knowing that full well after he marries her, though he loves her selflessly, self sacrificially, and with all his whole being, she would continue to play the whore, with just about every man she laid her eyes on. And each time she would leave, chasing some man other than her husband like an animal on heat, God commanded Hosea to go and get her, and bring her back under his roof. Forgive her wanton lust, and love her all over again!

This book is not an allegory as some suggest. Hosea was a real man and Gomer his wife, was a real woman. This was the Prophet's lot from God. This was God's way of showing His rebellious ungrateful people of the northern Kingdom, (those 10 tribes to the north), just how lust filled, how idolatrously unfaithful with other gods, were they to Him. That Very One who, Exodus 19:4, "had carried them on eagle's wings and brought them to himself." Out of the brick kilns of Egypt!

And at this point in Hosea, God had had enough. He would cast aside Israel as a nation. Only the two tribes of Judah to the South would be left. And even they, during the time of Jeremiah the Prophet and Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian king, would fall. But despite all of this, God would remain faithful to His covenant with Abraham. Genesis 12:2: "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you, I will make you great and you will be a blessing." Genesis 13:16: "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted." Genesis 22:17: "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and as the sand on the seashore."

And as Matthew Henry explains, here we have the two peoples of the world. The heavenly seed and the earthly seed. The people born of the promise and the Holy Spirit, and the people born of the flesh! Well in chapter 1:4, the first child born to Hosea through his adulterous wife Gomer, God tells Hosea to call him "Jezreel," which means God scatters. The second child, v6 a girl, must be called Loruahah, which means, "for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them." And v9 the third child, a son, is to be called. "Lo-Ammi," which means, "for you are not my people, and I am not your God." Yes, such was the adulterous idolatrous contempt that the people had shown toward God, that He would put an end to them!

No friends, our Almighty Holy God will not tolerate sin forever. There are days of reckoning which are going to fall upon our beautiful country of Australia. For our physical and spiritual adultery. Indeed, they are already taking place. Droughts. Fires. Floods. This virus! Our spiritual adultery is unbridled. We worship everything under the sun but God. Indeed, we invent new gods to serve. As a nation we have rejected His deliverance, "out of darkness into his wonderful light." On the whole we as a nation have rejected the Blood of His Own Son. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Yes as a nation we have believed that we have it all under control. We are the masters of our own destiny. Well, enter China's financial bastardry upon our economy, and this virus upon us physically, and clearly, we can see how wrong we as a nation were, and still are! It was the same throughout Israel's history and will also be the same in our own country today. In God's Own time, He will visit His Wrath upon us!

Dear friends, as I have said over the years, there are no such things as natural disasters. All the events in creation are supernaturally sent by God with the message, 'return to Me' says the Lord. But sadly, we don't seem to be listening. Yet the Almighty will continue to seek to get our attention Beloved. But we as His people, need to be sure that we ourselves are hearing Him! So over the period of time of three children being conceived, born and weaned, God had been pronouncing judgement upon the northern Kingdom of Israel. Yes, "Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God." Wouldn't you think that at such dire words from the mouth of God Himself

the people as a nation would have fallen on their faces in repentance after these prophecies? When Jonah went to the murderous nation of the Assyrians in Nineveh, that whole city fell into sackcloth and repentance in the hope that Yahweh would relent. But not God's Own people! So He then rejected them as a nation. Those people of the dust, who according to Matthew Henry, were God's people in name only, are cast aside by Him.

But then in v10 of Hosea chapter one, the continuation of the children of the promise who would be as, "numerous as the stars in the sky." The true Israel of God under one head. Even Christ. Yes physical Israel rejected but spiritual Israel preserved! V10. "Yet the Israelites will be as the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, you are not my people, they will be called sons of the living God."

Brothers and sisters notice, that such would the nature of the relationship change between the true people of God and the Almighty, that when the fulfilment of these words of Hosea came to fruition, that the nation would not just be called, "God's people" but, "sons of the living God." Yes, "in the place where it was said to them you are not my people."

Friends do you understand? This is you and me. If we are not Jews by birth, it is said of us: "You are not my people." We were not born into the privilege and the understanding of being part of that chosen by God, physical nation of Israel. No, we are of the Gentiles by birth. We are of the nations of the world. But now under Christ, we are not only, God's people, but "sons," "children of the living God!"

Yes as we saw last time, there is a distinction, there is a line which divides, which distinguishes God's people, (even the children of God), from the rest of the world. And it is not what we do or what we say. It is not whether we were born into privilege or poverty. It is not where we were born or what language we speak, or what physical nation we belong to. No. Because that distinction, that line which divides God's people, (even His Own children from the rest of the world) is always, and only, Christ! Yes under Christ we have been made by God to be "a people." A nation! 1 Peter 2:9. "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation."

Look at how the prophecy of Hosea speaks of the people of Israel and the people of Judah being made one again. V11: "The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and will appoint one leader, and will come up out of the land." Now some suggest that this took place after the return from the exile out of Babylon. But that makes no sense at all, because the people continued to be rebellious and continued receiving God's punishments. Though there were brief moments historically speaking, of repentance. No, this reuniting of the nation of Israel as a nation can only be fulfilled in Christ. Look at the words: 'And they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land'. Clearly the imagery takes us all the way back to the book of Exodus. When God brought the people as one, "up out of Egypt. Out of the land of slavery." And there was one leader. Moses, under God. But that was only physical Israel. Because as we know, all of them except two, who were of age, (Caleb and Joshua), perished in the wilderness because of sin, on the way to the promised land.

But Hosea, who Peter lays hold of, speaks of spiritual Israel. The true people of God. The children of God. Under one leader. His Son! And friends wonderfully do the commentators explain, that the first child born to Hosea is called Jezreel. Because God would scatter the people in His Wrath to the four winds of the world so to speak. But the second Jezreel, which we read of in v11, speaks of a different scattering. It's the imagery of the great scattering of seed being sown. Because the season is right

for planting. It's going to be a bountiful harvest. It's going to be a rich season of bringing in the sheaves.

Look yet again at the words: "For great will be the day of Jezreel." Yes great will be the day of the sewing and reaping of the crop of salvation for the Kingdom of God! Jesus Himself said. Matthew 9:37-38 "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." He spoke also of the scattering of the seed of the gospel, "falling on the path. On rocky ground. Among thorns. And on good soil." Luke 8:11: "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God."

So that great scattering, is still taking place today. And we are part of that great harvest by God's Grace and mercy. We have been set apart by God unto Himself. Yes by God's Grace and Mercy we have those distinguishing marks of Jesus. It is His Mercy. It is His Mercy which separates us from the rest of the world! 1 Peter 2:10: "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." Friends, can you see how gently Paul reminds us that we have no reason to boast? Our pride and vanity have no place in the presence of God. One of the Jewish people's great downfalls, was that instead of the knowledge of their historic failures bringing them to their knees, as the reality of their idolatrous unfaithfulness throughout was recorded for all to see, and recall, was that they continued to believe in their vanity that God had chosen them through some kind of meritorious selection. Even as though they were in some way deserving of His choosing. But no! "Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Beloved, "mercy" is received. It is never earned. If something is earned, it is called wages. Yes something that is worked toward, even worked very hard toward, is called wages. Yes even as those wages of which we are all deserving. Romans 6:23. "For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Listen to how the word "mercy" is defined: Compassion. Forbearance. Clemency. Leniency shown to someone guilty of a crime, or misdemeanour. So even the old Collins dictionary applies the word "mercy" to someone who is guilty of a misdemeanour or minor crime. Not a capital crime. But the keyword which we do need to take note of in this definition, is the word guilty! Someone who is deserving of punishment. Yes dear friends, "mercy" is received, it is never earned. And in the case of sin, what we have all earned are "the wages of sin, death!"

Peter writes in v11: "Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul." Brethren, can you see again how Peter continues to distinguish between, to draw a line between, the people of God. And the rest of the world? "Dear friends I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world." Now today, when we think of the word "aliens," I'm sure that the first thing which comes to mind for the most of us, is science fiction movies and creatures and monsters from outer space. And you know, as ridiculous and as farfetched as it sounds, it's actually an apt description when you think about it. Because that is what Peter is describing us as and as we ought to appear, to that other nation. The people of the world! The way that we speak, and the way that we respond in any given situation. Even the way that we think. Wanting to take a lump of four by two or a cricket bat, to those self-obsessed protesters during these uncertain COVID times. Wanting to give back to those Chinese authorities, triple what they have so unjustly inflicted upon our nation in recent times financially. Wanting to give some of our politicians and public servants what they really deserve. Not their half million a year with rich provision for their retirement!

Hey I get it. I can easily be the hanging judge. But of course the problem is, that Jesus said, "let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Yes we are called to be as "aliens and strangers" in this world

and this life, to the unsaved humanity around us. Surely this means, to be not like everyone else. It's to be the opposite of being like everyone else. To not go with the flow. To not keep silent when our Lord's Name is blasphemed. To stand for Christ. Indeed, to stand for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, when silence is the easy way ahead. Because Jesus said, "I Am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except by me." Not a way, but "The Way." Yes "aliens and strangers" in this world brothers and sisters! But it's all counter intuitive. Because it's not about self-preservation. It's all about the Cross. It's all about a Christ centred proclamation of our Saviour and our God! "To abstain from sinful desires that war against your soul," Peter writes.

Peter really has a way with words, doesn't he? "To abstain from sinful desires that war against your soul." You know, when I read Peter's "God breathed" words, I think to myself, we are cut from the same cloth. What I mean to say is, in regard to his failings and weaknesses. He really gets me. He gets that constant battle which is taking place within my heart and within my life. As we have seen so many times over the years from Paul in Romans 7: "The things I want to do I do not do. No the things that I hate. This is what I do."

Yes Peter understands my wretched thoughts and words. The selfish actions and reactions. The silence. Yes the wretched silence when I should be shouting from the rooftops, what God has done for me through Jesus! The laziness that I struggle with both physically and spiritually. The battle with pride and vanity. Always wanting to be right. With speaking first and then engaging the brain afterwards. Yes, Peter gets it. He gets me and my struggles! Praise God, that such things are written as flashing lights warning us. Because that's what these things are. They are the lights of warning to be on guard against such things. To Beware. To be on guard spiritually against "our adversary the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking souls to devour," 1 Peter 5:8 says.

But friends, these things are also warning lights that flash at us saying: Beware if it's all too easy. Beware if your Christian walk is a breeze. Because if Peter struggled, and if Paul struggled. And indeed even Jesus struggled in Gethsemane, and at the cross. And if all the apostles and saints have had struggles with the flesh and sin in this life in all its forms, but the life for Christ in this life for you is a breeze, then Beware. Because Satan is near and the fall into hell is deep. And it lasts for an eternity! "Sinful desires that war against your soul."

Beloved there is war which is taking place within the lives and souls of all true believers, because "Jesus is precious to us." But the pull of the world and the old life is strong. And there is no overcoming it, apart from Christ. So we must be on guard against such "sinful desires" which do battle against our desires for heaven! But also on guard, that we do not turn away from the war. But to engage it on all fronts. Because we "Are Sons Of The Living God!"

Let's Pray!