

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
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## God's Choosing

1 Peter 2:7-10

2:7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

2:8 and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

It is honor to be chosen. For students, how wonderful it is to be chosen for a scholarship recipient or exchange student! The Academy award for a movie and the three stars for a restaurant would be such an honor. In Japan, many cities and regions are trying hard to be chosen for the site of world heritage.

But these are just honors from the people. The Bible teaches us that those who believe in Jesus Christ are already chosen by God and given an honor. Today's scripture teaches us why, what, and what for the believers are chosen.

### **1. Reason of Choosing**

First, let's think about why they are chosen. Those who believe in Jesus Christ all listened to God's word, realized that they were sinners, and knew that Jesus Christ died on the Cross and was

resurrected in order to forgive sins and cleans them from sins. They did not only acknowledge it but truly repented their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and the Lord. In other words, they chose Jesus Christ as the Lord of their life.

However, Lord Jesus says in John 15:16, “You did not choose me, but I chose you.” Lord Jesus actually chose us before we chose him. This means that there was God’s guidance and support behind the decision of our faith. If we grab the hands of Lord Jesus, then when we become weak, we may let his hand go. But if Lord Jesus grabs our hands, then even if we become weak, we never separate from Jesus. He will grab our hands and we can grab his hands again. There is no more assurance than Lord Jesus chooses his believers. This is the grace of being chosen.

But why are the believers of Lord Jesus chosen? Are they worth it? No. Peter denied Lord Jesus to protect himself, saying “I don’t know Jesus”. Paul was even a prosecutor who captured the believers of Lord Jesus and sent them to jail. But they were chosen not only as a disciple of Lord Jesus but also as the apostle of Christ. It is because God chose them based on his grace and mercy. Paul praised God’s grace and mercy, saying, “But by the grace of God I am what I am” in 1 Corinthians 15:10, and “Though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief” in 1 Timothy 1:13.

Every believer is chosen by his grace and mercy. In verse 7 writes, “So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’ And ‘a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.’” The

verse describes that people did not accept Jesus Christ; moreover, they rejected Him and threw Him away. Verse 8 says, “They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.” It is harsh to say “as they were destined to stumble”, but what it means is that there is no salvation if they listen but not accept the good news that they will be saved if they believe in Jesus Christ. If they close the only door to salvation by themselves, then there are no salvations.

However, God kept speaking his words and inviting those to faith, who had closed the door to his words and not chosen the Savior. Even people don't choose God, God chooses people and this is his grace and mercy. Verse 10 says, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy”, which clearly describes that the choice is due to his mercy. This word is cited from Hosea Chapter 1. Prophet Hosea named his two children “Lo-ruhamah” and “Lo-ammi” according to God's order. Lo-ruhamah means “No mercy” and Lo-ammi means “Not My People”. These were God's message. Israel people received a special asylum from God as his people, but they betrayed Him and no longer behaved as his people. Therefore, God ordered his people to repent through Prophet Hosea's family.

And God promised to those who repented, “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ it shall be said to them, ‘Children of the living God.’” in Hosea 1:10. In the Old Testament, there is no such a Book that clearly describes God's mercy as the Book of Hosea. Peter cited from the Book of Hosea and told people, who stood against God

and destined to perish, that his mercy would guide people to repentance and returning to God, and bring salvation to the people.

Why did God choose us? We cannot completely understand. But we can say this: God's choosing is based on his grace and mercy. Therefore, those who seek for his mercy would not be omitted from his choice. Because God chooses based on his grace and mercy, it offers the solid foundation to the believers.

## **2. Privilege of Choosing**

Next, let's learn about what they are chosen, and what kind of people God want to us become through his choosing. Verse 9 reads, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession." There are four titles of God's people in verse 9. They are "a chosen race", "a royal priesthood", "a holy nation", and, "a people for his own possession." These titles tell us about the privilege and promise, calling and mission of God's people. Let's learn about them one by one.

The first one is "a chosen race". The word "race" means "those who are generated". Christians are the people of God in the New Testament era as the successor of the people of God in the Old Testament era. However they are not generated from the blood line. Anyone in any country can be a member of God's people if the person was born by the Holy Spirit believing in Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:3 says, "According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." We cannot become the people of God by our own power. We only can become God's people by believing in Jesus Christ and through born-

again by the Holy Spirit.

The second one is “a royal priesthood”. Priesthood of Christian was already written in 1 Peter 2:5, “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Priests have a privilege to come close to God, but they also have a responsibility to bring people near to God. Priests are the mediators between God and people. They become the representative of God by giving the Word of God to people, and become the representative of people by praying God for people. Being the people of God is not only privilege, but also responsibility.

The third one is “a holy nation”. God is righteous, good, and love. God gave these attributes of character to human. When the Bible says that man was created in the image of God, it means that God gave his attributes to human. However human cannot stand the same level as God even human has God’s image. God is perfect, unchanged, and eternal, but human has various kinds of limitation. When God is called “Holy God”, it shows God is separated from human. “Holy” is the word that means the condition of pure and untainted, perfectly separated from all of uncleanness. Only God has such “holiness”.

Human also has righteousness, goodness, and love. But human righteousness sometime insists own righteousness. Human goodness may become self-righteousness. And human twisted love, too. Many believe that they can do anything in the name of “love”, and they made love selfish and partial. Though human righteousness, goodness and love are imperfect and easily distorted, God’s righteousness is the holy righteousness, God’s goodness is the holy goodness, and God’s

love is the holy love. “Holy” is an attribute of God, and it makes God unique from human and other creatures.

Only God is “Holy One”. Holiness belongs only to God. But God made the believers in Jesus Christ “a holy nation”. God sanctified them from sin and uncleanness and made his holiness grow in them. Therefore, Christians are called “saints” or “holy people”. They are called to be holier in their heart, speech, and action. It was written in 1 Peter 1:15, “But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” “To be holy” is the most important God’s command to his people.

The fourth is “a people for his own possession”. Christians are God’s possession. The believer in Jesus Christ was called as “Christian” at least by 40 AD. The name “Christian” means the one who belongs to Christ; the possession of Christ. Christians become the possession of God through becoming the possession of Christ.

### **3. Purpose of Choosing**

First, we learned about why we are chosen. Secondly, we learned what we are chosen. Thirdly, let learn about for what we are chosen. The answers can be found in what we’ve already learned. Christians were chosen because of God’s grace and mercy. Christians were chosen as “vessels of mercy”. (Romans 9:22-24)

Christians were called as “a chosen race”, “a royal priesthood”, “a holy nation”, and “a people of God’s possession”. These titles show that Christians are chosen not only for their own salvation, but also for the salvation of more other people. Christians are chosen for that the God’s choosing will spread among other people. Christians are chosen

not only to come close to God, but make others come close to God. This truth is written in verse 9, “You may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” If Christians forget the purpose of God’s choosing and their mission, they may not be able to understand the grace that brought them out of darkness into light and from death to life. They may not be able to fully receive the grace without living according to their purpose. We can receive God’s grace when we share it with other people.

A Korean pastor taught me that man should be born three times. First, we were born from parents. Next, we need to be born again by believing in Jesus Christ. And thirdly, we have to be born in our purpose or mission after becoming born-again Christians. Let us experience such a birth in purpose and mission. Let us know our purpose and mission as God’s chosen people. Let us live according to the purpose of God’s choosing, and testify the wonders of God’s choosing.

**(Prayer)**

Dear Father, you chose the believer in Jesus Christ as a chosen one, a priest, a saint, and a possession of Christ. You gave the mission to the believers who were chosen ahead to proclaim You and Jesus Christ to the people who would be chosen soon. Make us awake for our mission and live in it. In the name of Lord Jesus, Amen.