

The Greatest Nation

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[0 : 00] 1 Peter 2 verse 9! And Lord, help us to hear something from you, Lord, that we'll be able to apply in our everyday life.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Today I'm talking about what is the greatest nation in the world. What's the greatest nation in the world and how can we make it even better?

And especially, do you belong to it? Of course, we've just had Australia Day. There's been a lot of national pride. And we know that there's all kinds of nations we could talk about today.

I know represented amongst us, there's people from Chile, from the Philippines, from England, from Malta. There's a few Aussies, I'm sure. And people from all kinds of countries are probably not named here today.

But we're thinking about a nation and thinking, what is the greatest nation in the world? Of course, our Prime Minister says the greatest country on earth is, of course, Australia. That's what he says.

[1 : 23] But then other people have got different ideas. There's a whole lot of quotes we could give you. The greatest country in the world is the USA, says President Trump. President Biden says the greatest nation on earth is the USA.

Russia is, of course, the greatest country in the world, says Vladimir Putin. Readers of the Telegraph in the UK conducted a poll that said that South Africa is the greatest country on earth. Of course, we know the First Nations people of our country, they've got a lot of national pride as well. We know the Prime Minister, or rather the President of China says, China is the greatest nation in the world.

So says Xi Jinping. Saudi Arabia is the greatest nation on earth, says Salman of Saudi Arabia. Turkey is the greatest country on earth, says Recep Erdogan.

It's like men are obsessed with this idea, we've got to be the greatest. We've got to be the greatest country and superior to all other human nations across the world. What is the greatest nation in the world?

[2 : 22] Actually, they're all wrong. What is it that makes a nation great? It's the big question, isn't it? Of course, the Bible tells us that in Proverbs 14, 34. It reads, Righteousness exalted the nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

And so these world leaders are all wrong. But truth is, many of you are part of the best nation, the greatest nation. God promised Abraham a great nation in Genesis 12, verse 2.

He says, I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. We can be part of the great nation, the greatest nation.

It's my homeland and most of yours. I'm not talking about Mother England, but the great nation by faith that we can be part of. It's what the Bible calls the better country of the heroes of the faith.

In Hebrews 11, it reads, But now they desire a better country. There's a better country yet ahead. That is unheavenly. And so it says that God has prepared for them a city.

[3 : 31] There is a better country. And for the meantime, we're kind of just travelling through. We're strangers and pilgrims for the meantime. What marks this nation?

We see, as we've read, that this nation is a holy nation. In 1 Peter 2, verse 9, it tells, as we've just read, But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation, but a peculiar people that ye should show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The holy nation. It's our identity. Really, it's our identity in Christ. It's our purpose, our relationship with our Lord. We are that holy community, a holy people.

Notice he says, Not you should be, or you might be, or you will be, but ye are. Ye are a chosen generation. It's already true for you that are saved, that we have all of these things.

We are a holy people. Do you know who you are? It's very important to think about these truths, and we're going to touch on some of these words in this text to unpack that a little.

[4 : 38] As believers, we're called to belong to this holy nation. It's interesting that wording there called you out, called out. This phrase, called out, the word translated out is ek, and the word translated called is kalisantos.

And the Greeks put these words together to form another word, but ecclesia, ecclesia, which means called out, and refers to an assembly or a gathering of people that has been called together.

Now, I was born in a town, or near a town called Eccles, which is based on ecclesia. So I was born in a church, you know. Ecclesia, it means church. And we're part of the called out people, the called out people of God.

The assembly, the church, the gathering of people. It's talking about God's people called out by his mercy, receiving his mercy to be the people of God. And we see the church, as Peter's addressing the church here, the church has been called out, called out of captivity.

Captivity to sin, Satan, and death, called out to be God's people. And earlier in 1 Peter 2, it talks about the spiritual house that we've built up as living stones.

[5 : 50] What is this holy nation? When you think about it, we belong to the kingdom of God. And we're daily representatives of it to our world in our daily lives.

The word of God says we're like ambassadors. We are ambassadors. So when you think of an ambassador, they represent their country. They're the one who speaks for their country. Paul says we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did receive you by us.

We pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God. Think of it. What a privilege that we have.

What a high honour that we represent this great high king, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

And what he has done for us, what he can do for others. We want to tell others of that. Think of it, brothers, sisters today, that we represent Christ and his kingdom on this earth.

That's mind-boggling to think of it, isn't it? That we represent him as we go out into this broken world, that we are his hand extended. You are the holy nation.

[6 : 50] We live to tell others of this great saviour, as this community, this holy community of believers, that we are. And when you think of the word nation, some think of nation as speaking of government, of interrelationship.

We think of God's government over us, God's kingdom, don't we? Actually, the nation and the government are different concepts. I heard one preacher say, and I thought it was a good quote, the greatest threat to our nation is the government.

Depending on the government of the day, it can be true, can't it? So let me address the subject of the nation that we are, that you are, the saved, that you belong to, and what that means for us.

What do we think of when we think of a nation? We think about geographical boundaries. Yet this nation has no geographical limitations. Of course, there's some moral boundaries God wants us to stay within.

But notice that the church is called, here, it's a holy nation. A people set apart for God's glory. Holy. God calls them holy.

[7 : 53] A holy people. And that's really an astonishing thought, that we can be holy. What does that mean? It means we're set apart. We're separated. As it reads in 2 Corinthians 6, 17, it says, the Lord calls us out to be separate, to touch not the unclean thing.

And he says, I will receive you. Holy nation people can't follow the world. We're different from the world. There's something different about us as saved people, just by virtue of being saved.

Because the holy God is our Father. We read his holy word, the Bible. We preach a holy message, the gospel. And we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And we're commanded to live holy lives, to be that holy nation.

And so we're called to be distinct. He says, come out from among them. We're special in the sense that we're different. We're taken out of the world, called out, called to be distinct. And Matthew Henry says, distinct of another spirit.

That's the sense of it, isn't it? So we don't blend in. We're called out. We're called out. And we're called to be something distinctly holy. We're a holy nation. In other words, we're a God set apart people.

[9 : 03] That's something special. Every one of you that believe, you're called out. You're set apart. You're separated people. And holiness is not a popular theme. Sometimes you rarely hear a sermon on it.

You're not likely to find it as a topic in the top 10 books down at the bookstore, the Christian bookshop. But holiness is right through the Bible. God speaks to us right through the word about holiness.

And it should be the passion of our preaching. It's the focus of our lives. Holiness. It's intimacy with God. It's that radical surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

It's spirit-empowered living. He's washed us. Think of that. With that fountain open for sin and uncleanness. He's washed us in that. And he sanctified us by the word applied to our lives.

That's how we get holy. Get more of the holy Bible and we get more of his holiness. The sense of what he wants for us. Of his truth. His holy word. He says, sanctify them. Make them holy, he says, through thy truth.

[10:02] Thy word is truth. And he shows the holy people how to be holy people. To walk in that holiness. And so 1 Peter 2 says, ye are a holy nation. So this holy nation, it's made up of all believers in Christ, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

Now I love our nation Australia, but it's definitely not a holy nation. I don't know about you, some people in the past might have called it a Christian nation. It's far from that, isn't it?

Australia is not a Christian nation. I think we've got one of our prime ministers on the record saying such a thing too. Well, certainly in the USA they said that, didn't they? That the USA is not a Christian nation.

So said Obama. And when we think of these words of the holy nation, really it harks back to where it speaks of that the first time in Exodus 19 verse 6.

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, an unholy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. So these words were first said of Israel. It's a sad fact though, that most of the people in the nation of Israel do not believe in Jesus Christ.

[11:09] They reject Christ, which is very sad. They blaspheme Christ in the Talmud. Israel is not a holy nation at present. One day? Maybe so, but not for the present.

Wickedness is rampant. They're blinded. They're in unbelief. We see 1 Peter, the holy nation that Peter's talking about is the church. It applies to the church. So there's a kind of correlation.

The church is likewise called the holy nation. The holy nation that we are by faith. And we, you and me, can be part of that holy nation in the here and now, in the present tense.

We can be a part, you and me, the saved. Holy. What does it mean? Webster defines it as set apart to the worship of God, spiritually whole, godly.

Are we such a people? We could say the church isn't very holy too, frankly speaking here today. Many quarters it's missing that holiness too.

[12:08] But God wants us to be that holy nation, that is that spiritual people, where the Holy Spirit cleanses the heart, the surrendered Christian, where God can use you and fill you with his Holy Spirit.

Because we have the positional holiness, we are holy because God says we are. God is holy and whatever God says is holy, is holy. That's positional holiness.

So, God says you are holy. So it's true. We're set apart by a holy God, separated by his designation. We are called, out of an unholy nation, including Australia, to be a holy nation.

So there's that positional holiness. And secondly, there's a practical holiness. It's got to do with our behaviour. And God's working on us. God's working on me, on our behaviour, our languages, our attitude, such that our behaviour lines up with who?

God says we are, a holy people. And that's the practical holiness. Peter writes, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation.

[13:19] It means your conduct, your way of living. He says, because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy. It's his will for you, for me, that we be that holy nation. Holy in our conduct.

There's no room, really, for unholy talk, unholy behaviour, unholy attitudes. We need to crucify that. And that's a day by day thing, isn't it? When they crop up, we need to nail them down, and throw them out, crush them.

Be holy, God says, for I am holy. And as far as the term nation goes, nowadays we think of it as a nation state, as geographical and political entities, but the concept of nation is bigger than land.

There's this concept of empire, isn't there? So, I suppose we could belong to the British Empire, but be in another nation.

And it's the same for us as God's people, isn't it? We're in the nation of Australia, but actually we're part of the holy nation too. Because God's kingdom is that reign across the whole world. We see that in Psalm 103.

[14 : 27] It talks about his throne, it's in the heavens, and his kingdom reacheth over all. So the church is, in a way, God's holy nation among the nations. When you think about it, it's a nation without borders, isn't it?

Because the church is worldwide. His reign is over all. His kingdom reacheth over all. So the holy nation is not a political nation, but it's a spiritual nation. And so the Lord says, my kingdom is not of this world.

And unlike other nations, this unique nation, it has no ethnic or gender distinction. We see, as Paul says, there's neither bond nor free, there's neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither male nor female. You're all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ, then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. What a wonderful thing it is that we're drawn into this body that is the church, whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free, whether male or female, made one in Christ Jesus.

And we're of Abraham's seed. So this holy nation, that is the church, has got no national boundaries. Every culture, tongue, kindred and tribe can be part of this nation.

[15 : 35] And it's a spiritual kingdom. Think of that. So you church are a holy nation. What's more, you're also called chosen. You're chosen. You're a chosen generation. Our Lord has provided this for us.

And he's given us his grace and favour, as it was said of Israel again, in Deuteronomy 7 verse 6, A people set apart from the rest.

There's a sense that Israel is called the chosen people. God used Israel in his plan and purpose to bring about God's promise to Abraham to bring the Messiah.

The Israelites were a chosen generation. And by faith, we are of the same spiritual seed, of Abraham. Born again. Born from above. There's now one head. We're partakers of one life, one salvation, one hope, one home in heaven.

Brought together as that one people. And Peter's writing here, in 1 Peter 2, specifically to the church. And he's saying to you, to us now, ye are a chosen generation.

[16 : 46] Think of that, that you're chosen. That's special, isn't it? And it's like, as someone would adopt a child, they choose that child. And that's what God's done for us, hasn't he? He's adopted us, he's chosen us, he's selected us, he's set his love on you.

And the New Testament teaches that God's chosen people are we who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter what our nationality. And as believers in Christ today, we want family.

No matter our nationality, we're brought together as God's chosen people. You know, we might have argy-bargies about when the World Cup's on, who you're going to barrack for, that you might barrack for, the country of your birth or of your family's origin and have that kind of interplay there about who you're going to barrack for.

But really, it's kind of, it's all a man-made idea really, isn't it? Man's boundaries about countries and such things. But as believers in Christ, we're one nation. That's what really matters.

That's what's important. And that we're sons of Abraham by faith. That's a wonderful thing too. The father of the faith, the father of faith, Abraham, it says, know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

[17 : 56] Now people might remember that old Sunday school song, Father Abraham has many sons. I am one of them and so are you. You know, that's true.

It's this doctrine there. But we are the children of Abraham by faith. And when it talks about, Abraham says, there's going to be a great nation. Of course, Israel was pictured there to come. But even more so, that we are the same, the same.

The people of faith are the same, are the children of Abraham. That's a wonderful blessing to know. He's choosing us in such a way to be chosen. We think back in schoolyard days when they picked people for the team.

It's good to be chosen, isn't it? To be chosen. And that's what God has done in that special way. To the saved people today, we can know we are chosen, selected. Before the foundation of the world, God set his affection upon you and he chose that Christ would die in your part.

You're not chosen because of race or creed or talent or money and certainly not for works, but you're chosen by his mercy. Because God loves you and he's had mercy on you.

[19 : 02] You are God's people. And it's not a matter of our ethnicity. You know, I know years back I encountered there's a false teaching called British Israelism that would say because you come from Britain or America that you've got some special favour.

You're one of the lost tribes of Israel. That's bunkum. It's total bunkum. But we know it's nothing to do with where we come from. We can come from Timbuktu and be a child of Abraham.

Amen? We don't have to belong to any particular nation or tribe or kindred. It's his promise to you to be that chosen people. You are mine, he says. And he says that in Romans 9 it talks about whom he hath called not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles to think God's extended his salvation plan so widely that anyone can come.

Whosoever can come as he saith also in Hosea I will call them my people which were not my people and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them ye are not my people there shall they be called the children of the living God. You know it says that they rejected him but then it says in John 1 but as many as received him to them gave him the power to become the children of God even to them that believe on his name.

[20 : 20] We are the chosen generation in a very real truthful way that can be said of us Gentiles as truly as it could be said of any saved Jews. The Greek word generation here is genos.

So it's like God's genes in a sense that the DNA we've got his genes it's the kindred the offspring the family you could put it you are God's chosen family children of the living God and we think of that we're of the same family it doesn't matter what our culture our ethnicity whatever our background might be whatever our racial background might be it's kind of irrelevant it's actually what matters is that we're of that family of the faithful God has chosen you as you respond by faith a chosen generation what's more you're royal think of this too when we think of the royal family they make a big fuss about them don't they the royal family or of whatever kind now we've got the Danish one to make a fuss over we've got the royal the sense of royalty and you are called a royal priesthood notice this word royal Webster defines it as characteristic or befitting of a king magnificent kingly majestic when you think of kings and queens of royalty kind of it's something special isn't it and what's even more special is the kingdom of God isn't it isn't it aren't you glad you belong to the kingdom of God that the king of kings is your king and what's more he's your father too what a privilege we are royalty it's it could be put this word royal it really speaks of kings it's kingship it's the royal family that's who we are amen we don't have to go and look at the glossy magazines and read all the gossip about the royal family we're it we are the royal family so do we live like it worthy as a worthy king would live think of that when you know a king or queen's coming then they pull out all the stops don't they they tidy up everything

I remember when they had you know some royalty come to play for they just everything had to be spick and span and what about you and me when we think of the king of kings what dignity he's worthy of and likewise that should be something of us too of our nature and character God's people are royal you're royalty today think of that you're adopted into the very family of God that's what the Bible says and think of it as a king has a throne room which only select people can go to but for you and me that are sons and daughters of this king we can have ready access to the very throne room and of the church too it says not only are we kings but we priests as well Revelation 1 verse 6 says how God has made us kings and priests unto God think of that so not only are we kings but we priests too and a priest has someone who has direct access to intercede for others to offer spiritual sacrifices and a priest has got that way open it's the holiest as brother Peter was reflecting on on the the old testament times of sacrifice of offerings of the temple of priesthood well we are the priests as it were

I know I read someone say actually we're all catholic priests we're catholic priests what do I mean by that the word catholic means general universal priest the bible says you are priests so we're catholic priests now that sounds very heretical just to read that in context but the sense is that we are we are generally priests the bible talks about the priesthood of all believers so every believer is a priest what does that mean we can enter into the very throne room of God into the very sanctuary into the very altar the holiest of the holies in the old testament days it was just one select man at select times very few times that they could go into that holiest place but the bible says that we've got access now we've got boldness to enter in to enter the holiest place because we made such a there's such a closeness between us and God that we are so privileged to be counted priests to

have access into his very presence and to bring an offering to bring ourselves as the living sacrifice on the altar so you are a royal priesthood get that also you're peculiar now you might look at me and think I'm pretty peculiar and a lot of people do but we think of the word peculiar of course it means more than what we would put in the modern meaning of the word peculiar which I'll unwrap a bit but our text tells us you're a chosen generation you're a royal priesthood you're a holy nation a peculiar people a peculiar people that you should show forth the praises of him who's called you out of darkness into his marvellous light and verse 10 reads on which in time past were not a people but are now the people of God which had not attained mercy but now have obtained mercy think of that once we were nowhere now we're God's people once we had not obtained mercy now we have he's given such mercy he's lavished it upon us this describes it says the people of God the people in Christ it's not an ethnicity this chosen generation this royal priesthood this holy nation this peculiar people the church is now the people of God

Peter's addressing here notice here the mercy that we've obtained God's called the father of mercies in 2 Corinthians 1 verse 3 think of the wonderful grace and mercy that God has so extended to we unworthy as we are wonderful grace and mercy and he's counseled you and me his treasured possession treasured beyond measure his special possession his beloved people and think of how he loves you so he holds you in the highest esteem you're irreplaceable you're fashioned for his glory you're adorned with his grace he's talking about the faith faith in Christ you're peculiar in a good way in a good way we should be more and more peculiar shouldn't we in the sense of more and more like Christ more counter-cultural more different from this world you're peculiar in that you're deeply loved and infinitely valuable in his sight to think Christ died for your sins that's special you're very precious and when you think of peculiar we're peculiar in the sense of our devotion to God the world doesn't have that you're peculiar you hold fast to his word you believe what he says you're peculiar because you've got a distinct lifestyle that reflects his glory you're a special people you're his own precious beloved people it means a special people where it says a peculiar people so when you think about that if you just unwrap that a little that thought of peculiarity it's speaking of a noticeable difference about you it's speaking of you being distinct you're distinctive now of course we can all slide back into worldly ways and be ashamed

[27 : 33] I can I do have done will do God wants better from us doesn't he from what we're inclined to do to be that distinct people to be that peculiar people such that people say wow they're different that's different different standards different ideals different values something different about them wow something strange about them the world would say isn't it because we're pilgrims and strangers aren't we and tells of how a believer is not his own we bought with a price a price what a price and you belong completely to God it sets you apart doesn't it makes you peculiar you stand out something different different from the world we're God's own people are special people that's talking about you and me the church God's own special people we're special why because we belong to God when you think about it there's museums in our city here and sometimes the museum is filled with lots of ordinary things there might be a hat a cane a shoe some uniform or other what makes them special what makes them significant is that they once belonged to someone famous sometimes you hear those auctions where they're auctioning off

Michael Jackson's shoelace wow that's special that's peculiar I want that I'll pay a million bucks for that that's what some people are like isn't it why there's nothing special about a shoelace but it's who it belongs to that makes it special think about you and me nothing special about me but it's who I belong to that's what makes me peculiar that's what makes me special that's what makes you special because Jesus loves you so that you belong to him he's purchased you with his precious blood you're purchased you belong to him you're no longer your own you're bought with a price wow what a price you're priceless we couldn't buy that when you think it's kind of a thought isn't it that God takes ordinary people just like you and me and because he works on us in us that's what makes you special that's why we're special isn't it and our value doesn't belong to us it's the value that he puts on us because we belong to him we're a people prized by God treasured by him we should glorify him then by giving him the first place in our lives give him glory it says in Ephesians 2 we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel but he says now

Ephesians 2 19 now therefore you're no more strangers and foreigners but you're fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God the word household means family so we were once strangers from Israel from the commonwealth but now we're included we're part and parcel of it we're the fellow citizens with the saints with the household of God really there's only one way of

salvation of course there's only one people of God in the sense of it truly there's only one people of God there's only one people that can be saved the people of God in the sense of it is so true that we can be included we can be fellow citizens such that there's no difference and we see the amazing sense of it that we can actually be considered a true Jew just talking of the one who is a Jew inwardly I could say to you this morning I'm a Jew Romans 2 29 he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is of the heart in the spirit not in the letter his praise is not of man but of God so we can be truly a true Jew that's amazing isn't it

I don't have to wear the funny hat they do and go like this at the wailing wall but I'm a Jew amen because I'm one inwardly because Christ is in me and so can you be by faith in the sense of it and Peter's saying God's people are a peculiar people the church think of it in Christ's church there's no blood or gender distinction because you come from the tribe of Benjamin Paul says I count that but dung doesn't matter what tribe I belong to it's whether I belong to Jesus it's whether Christ is in me Christ in me and in Christ really there's neither Jew nor Gentile as Paul says again as we said before there's neither Jew nor Greek there's neither Jew nor Gentile he's saying and Paul describes the make-up of the church here the saved belong to one family think of that to think God's opened his mercy so widely that we can be received you know back in old covenant days there was that exclusivity so much well pretty much but now the arms of God are wide open Jew, Gentile everyone can come and be that part of that great salvation that make-up of his family the family of God and even someone who's been held a slave can answer the kingdom you know there's no social caste system there of course the Bible does not condone slavery but it was a reality at the time this was written the church in other words it's composed of all who have faith in Christ and Paul describes the church likewise in the same term peculiar when he's talking about the blessed hope which we should all be looking for 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 a peculiar people there's that word again peculiar people zealous of good works so Paul says the church should be peculiar as believers as we're looking for his coming we are that peculiar people think of it friends we think of the peculiarity that we have in other words the distinction that we have there's something that's wow this is amazing this is wonderful that Christ has redeemed us from our sins he's redeemed us from all iniquity it says he's purifying unto himself this peculiar people we can think of peculiar again as this sense of God's own possession that you belong so belong to him that you're very much his and he is yours when we think of peculiar it should mean something different about how we live so Paul's saying here you should be a peculiar people zealous of good works there was a time where there was a guard on duty and he had this rose in his buttonhole and some drunken man came along and snatched out his rose and the guard turned red in his face but he did not say anything and someone was watching all of this and they said to the guard how did you keep your temper you said nothing and the guard simply replied [34 : 19] I'm on duty think of it for you and me brothers and sisters when something might provoke us do we think actually I'm on duty I'm on duty we are 24 by 7 you're a Christian 24 by 7 you don't switch it on and off depending the company you keep or the circle that you're in people are counting you a Christian 24 by 7 and wherever we are whatever happens to us whatever's going on for us I'm on duty I'm peculiar yeah because I belong to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords so I'm always on duty and the onlooker thought this behaviour was peculiar it was strange it was odd he wasn't doing what most people would have done but he was representing the King that he was serving he was representing the King because he was on duty and think of that for yourself brother sister that our doctrine our sound doctrine should affect our conduct we're not just blabbing it claiming it speaking it but we're living it we're living it out and so conformity to Christ is the Bible pattern now when we're talking about works we're not talking about lordship salvation

I know we could talk at length about that as some would teach the idea that our salvation depends on our behaviour they call it lordship salvation if you've heard of that you want some advice about that I can give you more on that particular subject now there is the truth of the lordship of Christ we believe in that amen he is lord and what we do have need of not lordship salvation but lordship discipleship it's good that we live as disciples of our lord that we live out our faith practically genuinely where the rubber hits the road that Christ is lord in the day by day living of our lives that's the discipleship part so in other words our conduct should line up with our profession of faith that's an important thing to do to have but our salvation isn't dependent on the works not in any way so

what guides us through life ought to be the word that is the authority and we think of a nation think of a government think of the administration of the kingdom of God that we're under the authority that we're under is the word of God isn't it that's the ultimate authority as to what we believe how we behave so as we come to wrapping up what this 1 Peter 2 verse 9 talks about again the verse here we've heard about these truths that we're a chosen generation a royal priesthood a holy nation a peculiar people then it says that that you should a couple of things here we could draw out that you should show forth the praises of him now don't you love it when you come to church and you sing out his praises amen had some new songs today that's a blessing isn't it sing out his praises we should sing forth his praises when we get together that's a great thing to do to show forth his praises why should we praise him he's transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness he's transferred us out from that oppression and misery of sin into the light of the glorious gospel the privileges of the gospel show forth his praises so we should be such a people that we're bearing witnesses as it reads ye are my witnesses saith the lord god's called us to testify we've got a message to declare to testify to the world the greatness of our god and of his great salvation we're sent into a dying world that needs jesus christ so we're sent we're sent friends this holy people this holy nation that we are we're sent we've got a mission a biblically mandated mission why that we should show forth the praises of him so be always ready to witness don't think oh i'm not a christian in this setting so i can just act up you're a christian all the time be always ready always ready to give an answer so when you're down at the workplace the school place the shop place you know it's easy to get annoyed with the shop assistant if you get a shop assistant these days you get annoyed with the shop and you show your flesh i can at times oh where's the oh no checkouts open standing in a queue and you lose your call and you think oh what if i was to witness at this time am i ready to give an answer am i being a good testimony be always ready so be on your guard be always that witness be always ready to witness god wants you to please him brother and sister god wants you to praise him and he says in isaiah 43 it reads this people have i formed for myself that they shall show forth my praise think of why you should praise god i did a bit of a search i put it on facebook what what should we praise god for it's why he's made us to praise him he's formed us for his praise that you should show forth his praise think of it why should we praise god to god be the glory he's rescued us from the domain of darkness he's brought us into his kingdom he's redeemed us from the curse of sin he's adopted us into god's family he's given us his word for our light and guide he's given us his exceeding great and precious promises he forgives us our sins and he remembers them no more he supplies all our need according to his riches in glory by christ jesus he's promised never to leave you nor forsake you he loves you with an everlasting love what are we to praise him what are we to praise him he heals our brokenness he binds up our wounds what are we to praise him he promises to be a refuge and a strength and ever present help in times of trouble he promises to be our shield and the lifter up of our head he fills us with joy and peace in believing he's blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in christ praise him praise him that ye should show forth the praises of him that ye should show forth his praises and also that ye should shine and next verse

Matthew 5.16 it says let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven let your light so shine god wants you to show forth his praises god wants you to shine and he gets the glory here so it's talking about really showing forth his praises as declaring the excellencies of our lord showing that lifting him up it's talking about worship again think of the purpose of our worship is that we would exalt the lord that we declare his excellencies what a joy that we caught into that marvellous light and it's through our actions and our words that we display god's glory let it shine let it shine this little light of mine amen you might say my light's pretty little but let it shine nevertheless let your light so shine and it says about our worship we think one day our worship will be in heaven as john the revelator saw the holy city coming down from god out of heaven friends the purpose of our worship is to exalt the king of kings and the lord of lords what a joy that we have we're caught into his marvellous light are we showing it forth in our actions in our character this word show forth is praises it's got the sense of proclaim it advertise it publish it in other words shout it from the rooftops is the sense of it and that's what we as god's people this holy nation are meant to be the church it's our job to show forth his praises to take this glorious gospel ultimately our destiny is that new jerusalem the holy nation jew and gentiles going to live in this holy city the new jerusalem is going to come down from god out of heaven the saved who are saved jews saved gentiles are going to live dwell in this near jerusalem a city of perfection and eternal communion with god what about for the meantime are we getting

ready for that time are we living as citizens of heaven on the here and now this planet earth we are the greatest nation on earth not talking about australia or any other country you could name the greatest nation is the church of god now there's a movement in america at the moment to make america great again if you people might have heard of that make america great again i wonder if we could say the same thing about the church couldn't we think where the church was where it is now think of revival days of the reformers of revivalists of missionaries of men and women of god who've laid down their lives as martyrs maybe we need to make the church great again amen make the church great again in the sense that how can we have that same zeal that same love that the faithful of old have had we should walk in their tread if the church is the greatest nation on earth how do we make the church great again maybe we need a greater appreciation that we are a holy nation we're under his government a greater appreciation of the government of god that he's watching over us our governor our king is walking beside us through every life everyday life we've got that sense that we're a chosen generation that's special isn't it that we've got access we're a royal priesthood do we use the access we have imagine

I know in some workplaces they give you an access card don't they a fob like this thing that you flash and you get access and only certain people have got certain access to certain places friends you've got an access to the very centre of the throne room of god do you use your access card as it were think of that do you use the access that you have to come unto your lord and speak to him in prayer and you've got a new owner you know his possession a royal priesthood can we regain again that sense of the kingdom of god that we're in it we are it the kingdom of god is within you a royal priesthood to get a sense again that we're a holy nation wow the holiness of god not only does he say that I'm saved as in positionally but practically he wants me to live that to live it out god helping me I will and that you're a peculiar people don't be afraid to stand out from the crowd everybody else is doing it doesn't make it right everybody else is doing it well you're different you're peculiar everybody else is doing it well that doesn't make it god's will for you what does god say to do that's what matters oh they'll think I'm strange they'll think

[45 : 30] I'm peculiar well good that's what you're meant to be you're meant to be peculiar that's a good thing people mock the Amish and this and that for this and that but actually they're willing to be different that's a good thing don't knock them peculiar that's a good thing to be and that you should show forth the praises of him praises of him do you praise him of the wonders of the gospel the privileges you have as saved people today to think of it to show forth his praises such that others will hear about him the one who's called you out of darkness and into his marvellous light why don't you need to shine shine shine brighter greater let's make the church great again amen let's make the church great again royal again your royalty live like it the royal family let's make the church great again royal again let's make the church holy again the holy nation let's make the church peculiar again don't be afraid to be different doesn't matter what they say and laugh and scorn at you and mock at you you want to please your lord more than please them be peculiar again be praising again show forth these praises shine again shine brighter for the glory of god when we look back to other times we're not as royal as holy as peculiar as praising a people as we used to be friends we've got a bit slack

I talk of myself compared to where I used to be think of your first love when you first got saved sometimes we get such that we lose some of that don't we I can let's get let's get it back again revive us again great again lord you might be hearing all of this and you might say preacher I'm not sure that I'm part of that holy nation I'm not sure that I'm born again I'm not sure that I'm saved I'm not sure that I have eternal life have you joined this holy nation you can you can sign up today you can enroll today you can you can have citizenship granted today in that great kingdom of God the citizenship of his kingdom friends what do you have to do you have to transfer your allegiance so actually I want Jesus to be my king I want Jesus to be my lord my saviour I want Jesus

I want to trust him as the one who paid for my sin the one who can make me clean the one who can give me eternal life because he promises to I want to believe in Jesus I want to transfer my loyalty to Jesus to be my lord and you can do that today you can trust him for time and for eternity you can know a new citizenship in heaven and friends it's simply as the bible tells you how to be saved believe on the lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved he'll forgive you of your sin he'll give you that grace that mercy to take your sin to pay for it as he did pay and that you can have that payment paid you can have that trust today in him let us close lord we thank you as we think of this great privilege we have as this these words speak to us today as they spoke to Israel of old they speak to

us today in that census as your holy people lord as we called to be such help us to be such we pray if there's any yet to trust you that they'll say simply lord jesus i want to be in that kingdom i want you to be my king i want to be yours lord i want to belong to you i want to be your special possession i want to be that that peculiar people i want to be like like jesus i want to know you to be saved pray that that they might call on your name and be saved today and lord for every believer help us lord so so i have that heart by your grace and by your strength by your empowerment so that the church will be great again that whatever we've lost will regain it that you'll revive us again that we'll be that people of god that you want us to be in jesus name we pray amen amen