

Date: 21.06.2020

Time: 6pm

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Psalm: Psalm 65: 1 – 5 (Scottish Psalter)

Reading: 1 Peter 2:9-10

Outline: The Israel of God

a) Introduction

1. God's chosen ones

2. God's priests

3. God's holy nation

4. God's possession

5. God's witnesses

The Israel of God

- **Introduction**

The Israel of God is a description of the church – the spiritual children of Abraham.

Some might say that promises made in the Old Testament were for the Jews only, but not the New Testament promises. Some would say that the promises made to Israel have now all become promises for the church of God.

The Israel and Church are made one in Jesus. There are promises that were made to the Jewish people. The people of God is made up of Jews and gentiles – the two come together and become one people. There is one people of God – those who believe in Jesus Christ.

1) God's chosen ones

Those trusting in Jesus Christ are a chosen people, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God.

Undeserved: The choosing by God is undeserved – it's not His reward for good works and it's not the honour He gives as a result of faith. We're passive in God's choosing – this is undeserved grace. The element of divine sovereignty is balanced with God's divine grace and love. The choosing is an act of grace and mercy. God didn't have to choose Hell-deserving sinners to be His, but He did.

Unconditional: This is unconditional election – not based on who we are or what we will be, but based on God's will alone. God's decision is based on His character. The result of learning this cannot

be pride or boasting; the result should be humility. When we know that our sins are forgiven and any hope that we have for eternity is by God's grace alone, the response should be humility. He could have chosen someone else, but if He's chosen us, this should lead us to worship. It's not because of good in us, but because of God's goodness that we're saved. This work is by God and God alone.

2) God's priests

Intimacy: Priests were a blessed people in Israel with special privileges. They had special access to the presence of God. They enjoyed intimacy with and revelation from God with access to the scriptures.

Service: Priests were servants of God, called to serve Him and to serve His people.

Worship: The priests had access to the temple. They led the people in worship in the temple. As priests, they had a special position, and so have we.

Intercession: The priest interceded for the people. A prophet spoke from God to the people; a priest spoke from the people to God. Jesus is our great High Priest who intercedes for us. He has allowed us access to God. We're in the presence of God all the time. We've got the right to worship Him through Jesus. We're servants of God.

3) God's holy nation

Set apart by God: As God's holy nation, we are set apart by God to be His nation. We've been called out of the world, full of darkness into His kingdom of light. We've been called out of the family of the devil to come into the family of God. We've been called out of the kingdom of the devil to come into the kingdom of God. We're different from the rest of the world. We've been called by God to be His people.

Under the authority of God: As His holy nation, we're under God's authority. The ruler of our church and nation is God. Jesus is the head, the King of the church. This means that we aren't free to live the life we used to live because God is our King now. God's law guides us. We're His people, under His kingship and lordship – we're called to obey Him.

4) God's possession

Precious: It's a beautiful expression that we are God's possession. This doesn't mean that we're His property to dispose of; it means that we're His treasure – we are precious to Him. This is only possible through Christ. As Christ is precious to the Father, we are precious to God. We don't keep what we don't care about. God has bought us; He sacrificed His Son so that we could become His precious possession and belong to Him.

Safe: God won't let us go as He cares for us and delights in us. When God opens our eyes to our sin, it's hard to imagine how He saves us and keeps us, but He does. No-one can take our place from us;

this is God's place He's given us. No-one can compete with Him. No person, no sin, no demonic power can take us from Him. We might feel like giving up and leaving Him, but He thankfully doesn't let us go.

5) God's witnesses

Divine excellencies: It's our role to show the excellency of Him who called us to others. Our first duty before God and before men is to proclaim the excellencies of God. He's beautiful and perfect in all His ways. We're called to proclaim who He is – what a great word, “proclaim” is – it's not to debate or question. The more you study the person of God, the more amazed you'll be by who He is. The world we're in needs God – the people need to hear who God is and how wonderful He is. Everything in and around us threatens to weaken our faith and love for God – we need to be reminded of the excellencies of God.

Divine work: We must proclaim the work of God. We need to proclaim what God's done for us. An evangelist's job is to tell others what God has done for them. We're to proclaim God's person and His work.

Divine mercy: We've to proclaim to people, that God has been merciful to us. The more we grow to know God, the simpler our testimony will become – it's all about God's mercy to us. We have to tell others that God is merciful and that we've tasted and seen that He is good. There's a place for rebuking others, but we must proclaim the mercy of God as He's shown us mercy. We are saved, we are forgiven, we are going to enjoy eternal life in the new Heaven and earth not because we are good, but because God is merciful. Pray that God will show His mercy to those around us.