

1Peter 11-02-25a

This is Friday the 25th of February 2011. We continue our study in the book of 1st Peter. We resume tonight in chapter 2 verse 11 we'll take a moment as we begin to pause and go before the Lord in prayer and make the effort to ensure that God the Holy Spirit will be able to superintend and and Effectually perform his ministry in our midst shall we pray father.

We are so blessed when we look at our lives, and we see the gracious provision that you make the weaving together of Circumstances even in spite of our failures and our shortcomings you bless us and you use us as we are and you give us the opportunity to be more than we are and to Draw closer to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us and gave us all of these Potentials and possibilities we thank you for this passage of scripture. We ask your blessing on us as we study it together may God the Holy Spirit Find us teachable and impress on our hearts the truth that each of us need To live a life that is pleasing in your sight. We pray it in Jesus name.

Amen We have seen that Peter in writing this letter to the scattered Jewish Christians of the first century has Instead of politely Ignoring their situation has talked directly about it You know sometimes I was thinking about this because there is an author named Robert Timberg. He's a Naval Academy graduate class of 1964 and He wrote a book called the Nightingale song that talks about Jim Webb and Oliver North and But I can call him bud bud McFarland all these guys outranked me, but I just call him by their first name Anyway, John McCain Admiral Poindexter all of these individuals were also Naval Academy midshipmen and some of them were in the late 1950s and some of them were in the later 1960s and Robert Timberg was right in the middle. He was class of 64.

I think Ollie North and Jim Webb were class of 68 was it and John McCain and the Admiral were in the late 1950s But anyway, I was looking at Robert Timber because he wrote this book because a lot of these individuals were deeply embroiled in the Vietnam War three of them were Marine Corps Infantry commanders who saw significant action Jim Webb and Oliver North both are some of the most highly decorated Marines and and earned it I think I think Jim Webb in addition to a Navy cross has two silver stars and and enough salad to need two uniforms to wear It then Oliver North was not far behind him. Those guys were very amazing, but you look at them and their Experiences are more on the inside Robert Timberg also went to Vietnam and served in the infantry And he was wounded about two-thirds of the way through his tour and you can tell when you look at him He had Something dealing with a lot of flames happened to him and has had extensive amounts of plastic surgery Getting over it. I think he lost track of how many after 29 or 30 operations he lost track and he finally just quit having him.

He thought you know, it's just too hard It's too painful. It takes too long and he is very much Evidently a veteran who earned his Purple Heart But I was thinking about it looking at him. There's a there's a book Website that has a video interview that he gave about 15 years ago when this book came out and you see Robert Timber talking and it's really fascinating that the whole subject I enjoyed the book and For a number of reasons, but I was looking at Robert Timber I thought you know, you can't Look at this guy and honestly, you really can't read what he wrote without Realizing that he is very much A product of his education his training and his experiences in Vietnam.

You just can't help go through Crucible type experiences like that without being marked by it and he is marked in a very visible way When you think about this is a long introduction, but I'm getting there When you think about the the diaspora and you think about these Jews who also went through very traumatic Jews Typically did not voluntarily leave Israel they had spent enough time as a people outside of the land that they were happy to live there, but beginning with the Greeks and especially during the time of the Romans there were a number of Purges there were a number of incidents there were uprisings and and some people rightly or wrongly were associated with them and and Had to leave or were forced to leave and then in the beginning of the Christian era, there were some who were hounded out of town by Saul of Tarsus and and the others who were working On behalf of the Jewish religious establishment for a variety of reasons. These people were traumatically Expelled or had to flee their homeland you can imagine what it would be like if some weird kind of persecution happened here in Dallas and We all had to not just leave Dallas not just leave, Texas But had to leave the United States of America and go find some other place to live and take up residence amongst Hopefully some English-speaking people, but maybe not maybe we'd have to learn a language Well, that's kind of the situation that these people are in and when you think about someone who's got the visible marks of a physical trauma Sometimes people will will dance around this I noticed there was an hour-long interview on this book review website with Robert Timberg and the guy that did it is a guy I've seen on PBS either somewhere. He's really well known I don't remember his name, but he asked all of these searching questions went into everything, but he never asked Robert Timberg Hey, what happened to your face? You know What exactly happened that that you required all of these surgeries and and you know two years of recovery just to get back to normal life He never asked that question.

It was obvious Enough that it was a delicate subject so to speak Well, Peter has no such sense of delicacy for these people that are in the diaspora he says look you're out there scattered you're scattered amongst the ethnoi the Gentiles and Let's talk about that. It's really the theme and the subject of his letter This is God's will for you. You're supposed to be here.

It'd be like the guy doing the interview saying, you know Timberg. I Think if Timberg were a believer, I'm not Not thinking that he is but if he were the interviewer could say, you know, Robert It's pretty obvious to me that God Built this experience into your life and uniquely equipped you to do this that and the other you're Uniquely qualified to write a book about fellow Vietnam veterans You're uniquely qualified to talk about someone like John McCain who also came back with You know experiences that changed his life You're uniquely qualified since every one of these guys went to the Naval Academy and every one of them was involved in the Iran-contra Affair, which is kind of the reason that he wrote the book. So you're you've really got kind of an angle on this Well, that's what Peter is saying to these Jews of the Diaspora Unlike the Jews that are back in Israel unlike Jews that might be living Fat and sassy and in some coastal town on the Mediterranean.

These people have been shotgunned out into the Gentile culture of Asia Minor of Bithynia and Cappadocia and all of these other places and He says look let's talk about your situation let's talk about why God would be putting you here and He doesn't pretend like they're not scattered. He doesn't pretend like they don't have a problem He hits it head-on. So as we come to chapter 2 He says in verse 9 we saw this last time you are a chosen generation You are a royal priesthood.

You are a holy nation his own special people That you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light What's interesting about this is that he ties their present situation? to their Spiritual roots when he says you are a chosen generation a chosen race a chosen Genos, you know genea, we get the word generation from this Genome comes from this root, but there are a genos and you're a a selected you're a It's the same word that was used back at the beginning when he when he said you are elect. You're an elect generation elect on selected chosen called out Well, this goes back to oddly enough Isaiah chapter 43 Which we just covered in recent weeks. Maybe I should say recent months But you remember in Isaiah 43 20, it says the beast of the field will honor me This is God speaking the jackals and the ostriches Because I give waters in the desert in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people my chosen God says even these desert dwelling denizens and we talked about what those species likely actually are are Going to get blessing by association because I am caring for you you my chosen people Well this in the Septuagint the phrase is identical.

You are a genos Electon Then he says you are a royal And by the way, that's also found in Deuteronomy 10 15 The Lord delighted only in your fathers to love them and he chose their descendants after them You above all peoples as it is this day. It's a unique heritage of Israel throughout the Old Testament era from the time of Abraham forward all the way down to the to the Transition time into the church age and I've been asked many many times many discussions have come up Well, do the Jews still enjoy a special status today as heirs and descendants of Abraham? No, they don't There's nothing special about it. There's no reason for there to be anything special about it I know it's a shock and people say oh you're anti-semitic Okay How can you be anti-semitic when you're trying to say these people are in line for salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ? Just like everybody else they stand or fall by faith He that hath the Son hath life he that hath not the Son of God hath not life Period I don't care who you're descended from You could be the direct lineal descendant of King David and if you don't accept Christ as your Savior You are lost capital L OST.

You can believe all the Torah you want you can go to all the synagogue you want you can wear a little cap on your head and Light a menorah. It doesn't matter. He that hath the Son hath life.

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek in this dispensation none whatsoever None whatsoever. I say that emphatically and without hesitation from the Word of God. There is neither Jew nor Greek As far as God is concerned a God in the outworking of his plan is making sure the Jews don't get wiped out There's going to be some lineal descendants coming down there from Abraham Isaac and Jacob They're going to show back up for the last seven years of the age of Israel They will represent 12 of the 13 tribes apparently the Danites Don't make it.

I'm not sure quite how that works, but there's Ephraim and Manasseh and the other ten tribes, but not Dan represented in the 144,000 servants of God but In Peter's day and for the purposes of our study. We are looking at that transition time Peter is a disciple and an apostle. He is one of those who? ministered the gospel to the first generation of the church, which was almost entirely Jewish for obvious reasons and So he's talking to them and he is talking to them in terms of how do you interpret this new? Development in God's plan well interpret it in the light of what you know.

This is what you and I do as well. When it comes time for us to apply the Word of God, what do we do? We try to apply it in the light of what we already know.

You have to have a frame of reference. You have to have experience and context. This is why God doesn't call on Newborn believers or infant believers who need milk and not solid food to accomplish the more robust parts of his plan. That's left to the mature, those who have their senses exercised to discern Good and evil, and all of that's out of Hebrews chapter 6 and chapter 9 and 10 and so on.

It is important that we grow to maturity so that we have a frame of reference to draw on. We can apply the Word of God in new and meaningful ways based on our experience. This is why we require maturity for people to make decisions about getting married or About going into the military or about drinking alcohol or any one of a host of another of other things where you have an age Requirement. You must be 21 years old or older to do the following. You cannot engage in a consensual physical relationship unless you are such-and-such an age. Even our Secular legal code Recognizes that maturity is required because you need something to use as a basis for making your choices.

So Peter says, look you Jewish Christians of the dispersion remember Who you are? Remember what Israel was supposed to be. Well now you are fulfilling that, you're fulfilling it. Israel was to be a chosen generation, a chosen race, a chosen seed and You're the fulfillment because you have Accepted and believed on and placed your faith in the Messiah. You're the fulfillment of all of those hopes. You are a chosen race. You are a royal priesthood. You are the ones who are representing God before men in your communities in your far-flung locations. You are the ones who Pull the curtains back and allow people to come in and learn about God. They're gonna learn from you, and it's that kind of a priesthood. It's not a Levitical priesthood. It's not a Melchizedek in priesthood, which they would exercise on their own behalf.

That's a subject for a different discussion He says you are the ones who are making God manifest to these ethnoi these nations and this was also Foretold in the scriptures when he says royal priesthood you go back to Isaiah 61 6 you Israel shall be named the priests of the Lord. They shall call you the servants of our God You shall eat of the riches of the Gentiles and in their glory you shall boast These this is the first generation of Israel who like Paul bring the good news to the Gentiles these Dispersion Jews are kind of like mini Apostle Paul's they're all out there laying the groundwork later on Paul's going to be able to say We go into these communities and start telling them about the God of Israel. They say we already know about him Because these Jews paved the way Isaiah 66 21 I will also take some of your children Some of your descendants for priests and Levites says the Lord and it's a it's a harbinger.

It's a foreshadowing of this unique Ministry that they're going to have of the Lord Jesus Peter talked about this just earlier in our same chapter when he said you also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house a holy priesthood They're getting practice. They're representing God. They're Witnessing bearing witness to the Lord Jesus now and they'll do it that much more in the ages to come And remember John in Revelation chapter 1 verse 6 Says that the Lord Jesus has made us kings and priests To his God and father to him be glory and dominion forever and ever Revelation 1 6 is a reminder that we have been all believers in the Lord.

Jesus have been made priests well, is That just a self-centered one-on-one priesthood. I am my own priest Priests generally have a Mediatorial function of some kind the Levitical priesthood

Mediated the sacrificial system and the ritual system between the Israelites and their God Jesus Christ as the high priest of the Melchizedek in order Does the same for us? Melchizedek himself Ministered bread and wine and held a worship service when after Abraham defeated the kings of the plain so priests typically have Congregants or someone to whom they Represent and help to communicate God and that's what this priesthood is all about You are a chosen race. You are a royal priesthood.

You are a holy nation He says as we go further into verse 9 Holy nation this goes back to Exodus 19 6 God says to Israel you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation He says Moses. This is what I want you to tell the children of Israel You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation Same thing in Deuteronomy 7 verse 6. You are a holy people to the Lord your God The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth and in the same way that Israel was a chosen people specifically for God a Special treasure above all other peoples. That's Israel's relationship to God the Father to God in his United Trinitarian form but you think about the Lord Jesus Christ We are a special treasure and a chosen people as the church for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are his body and his bride We are united with him through a special ministry of God the Holy Spirit that did not pertain to Old Testament Saints Moses and Elijah and David and Daniel and all of the greats of the Old Testament are not Related to the Lord Jesus Christ the way you and I are we are heirs of a New covenant founded on new and better promises How could we further that away, but this is what Peter is reminding the the Jewish people in this dispersion and he's it's an interesting way to put it because They're kind of double-headed. They have all of the things True as as sort of former Old Testament Saints and Everything that they've learned when they were growing up about the heritage of Israel They are now fulfilling as first-generation Christians. And so it's it's Enhanced it's it's chosen people one dot one.

It's it's the new improved version and they can pull from their understanding that they've had ever since they were children and say oh This is the this is the reality. This is the this is the the actual Traction on the road here. My sandals are hitting gravel.

I am actually doing this priesthood thing I'm actually doing this chosen people thing right here in Pontus or wherever it is. They're living a people for God's own Possession and this goes back again to Exodus 19 5 Therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant then you shall be a special treasure to me above all people and Notice the conditional there if You will indeed obey You shall be Chosen people you shall be special treasure your eclectus applies If you will indeed obey my voice Exodus 19 5 Above all people for all the earth is mine, but you're especially mine God says Deuteronomy 4 20 the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace out of Egypt to be his people and inheritance as you are this day and Four chapters later Deuteronomy 14 to you are a holy people to the Lord your God and the Lord has chosen you to be a People-for-himself a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth They're out there amongst all these people. It was just an academic concept when they were in Israel Now they're beginning to see all of these people.

They say you know what? I've got a double heritage. I come from the stock and staff of Israel that has been God's chosen people But they didn't ever really enter into the fullness of it. But now I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ I've got the power of the Holy Spirit.

I've got the presence of the Word of God and I've got a mission I have been called I've been detailed to be a priest and a representative and Salt and light out here in the midst of these nations and when people might try to look down on me and to might try To say well, who are you you weird Jewish Christian sectarian? Strangeoid coming into our long-standing ancient culture and civilization and your customs are not our customs And you haven't adopted our ways and you kind of stick out you wear funny clothes you talk strangely and you get this Weird ritual you follow and feast you observe and we you're on the outs and Peter says that's not the way to look at it. You are the chosen You may be a minority but but you are the one that is going to be a blessing to that community to the extent that they will hear your words and and heed your witness don't look at yourself as Below you're above you are an ambassador. You are a representative.

You're not a last card Charlie and lowest guy on the ladder And don't let anybody make you think you are and Peter is building this in through spiritual truth He's hooking back into what they know. All of these passages were memorized by Boys when they before they ever got to their bar mitzvah They knew all of these passages by heart and many of these Jews were Hellenistic Jews already They already knew how to speak Greek They had studied their Old Testament scriptures in the Septuagint and the phraseology is word-for-word letter-for-letter Identical so it's not like they don't know what he's saying Paul refers to this in Titus 2 14 talking about the Lord Jesus who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself his own special people remember the King James says a peculiar people and And King James here says a peculiar people Peculiar his own special people zealous for good works passionate for doing the will of God You are chosen race royal priesthood Holy Nation people for God's own possession. So that It's not just aren't you a lucky prize winner? Aren't you a wonderful sweepstakes? beneficiary He does this for a reason So that you may proclaim We are the same We're not Jewish.

We don't have these historical Stepping stones that Peter calls upon to talk to the Jews of the dispersion, but we are similarly Representatives of God we are body and bride of Christ We are scattered in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation trying to shine like lights in the world So that our purpose is exactly the same to proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light and If our lives do not reflect that light We are not fulfilling our function. We are not Fulfilling our calling we are not fulfilling our destiny. We have been Predestined we have been ordained to this job this ministry this opportunity this ambassadorship in eternity past God said my son is going to come and redeem the fallen human race and From this period in time until this period in time everybody who comes to faith is going to be his special treasure his Unique people and they will reflect his glory They will lift up his name they will be his ministers and ambassadors I've got Israel working in these particular parts of time and in history Thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom, but in this unique Church Age.

This is going to be my gift to The Lord Jesus Christ, that's what God the Father did. That's how he destined us That's what he calls us to and if we are obedient if we respond we enter into it just like these people God says to Israel You're a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation and a people for God's own possession. How many of them entered into that as many as were obedient as many as Responded to the call God didn't say you can be a chosen race.

You might be a holy priesthood He said you are and yet all Israel is not Israel Everybody doesn't enter in many are called and few are chosen. How does that work? Where are the obedient ones? Where are the responsive ones? Where is the remnant? That's what God is working with. That's what he's looking for So in verse 10 you once were not a people but now you are the people of God and this is a weird we talked About this last week What a what an interesting turn about this is because with all of the things we've said and seen about Israel Israel after all of this calling and preparation wound up not really being the people of God and these dispersed and scattered and and denigrated and embarrassed and shamed and chased out of town Jews The these that people back in Israel would say well, you know, they didn't play their cards, right? They associated themselves with the wrong thing.

They didn't you know bribe the right people. They didn't conform They didn't hook into the Romans They didn't you know when in Jerusalem do as the Romans or whatever and and they got chased out They are the ones who were not a people but now are a people they are truly the people of God Even though they got chased out of town. They're not in Jerusalem can't do the feast can't do the sacrifices But they are more the people of God than the ones that are still there You who had not received mercy looking at your bad circumstances Have received mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ what seemed like Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt has turned out to be second highest in the land able to offer deliverance and blessing to Untold millions of other people.

They're in exactly that same position and it's Do you believe it? Do you understand it? Do you seize and lay hold of it and do something about it? We are in exactly the same position You think well now wait a minute. I'm Comfortable here in Texas. Some of us been in Texas longer than others, but you know I'm not a diaspora and I don't see me waving any big flag or coming in with a big new piece of information Everybody's already heard of Christianity Not your Christianity you look around and try to find biblical Christianity in this generation people who actually understand what the Word of God teaches what the Lord Jesus Christ Actually did for us what God the Father actually calls us to what God the Holy Spirit Actually empowers us to be and to do Where is that? You are it and other small congregations other Scattered individual believers hither and yon, do you see any large church? Do you see any major television ministry teaching the actual truth of God's plan and purpose through believers in this age? Do you see it published in books? Can you go down here to the Christian bookstore and find a great book on The things that that you see here in God's book You are the ambassador You are the light shining in the dark place God has revealed He's hidden them from the wise and revealed them to babes not many mighty are called God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise You're it.

You are the diaspora you and I are the ambassadors to Reflect the light of the glory of Jesus Christ as it is revealed in his word day by day action by action conversation by conversation Lifestyle by lifestyle month by month year by year child by child that we raise We are out amongst the ethnoi even those who claim the name of Christ most believers do not know who they are and they don't know why they're here and All you have to do is expose yourself to the Christian media and you'll know that this is true. So This is for us You and I are The chosen race the royal priesthood the Holy Nation a people for God's own possession and we want to Recognize it and live it and exploit it and push it to the maximum Can you imagine if knowing what you know if you could go back and be one of these Jews of the Diaspora? How on fire would you be to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ knowing that the Apostle Paul is going to be

coming pretty soon? and and Establishing churches and building up new pastors and deacons and and teaching all of the great New Testament truth, but you're there first You get to be the one who introduces you get to be the one that that paves the way And that makes the first introduction. So when people when Paul comes along, he's not a strange Hook-nosed bald-headed Jew from some far-off land.

Oh, you're talking about the same God that This guy's been talking about this been living next door to me for five years seven years ten years fifteen years This this is not a strange new thing other people have heard of this It's you know in the mouth of two or three witnesses. The thing is established. They got the witness of the Spirit They got a witness of these Diaspora and then here comes Paul and Silas and Barnabas and Timothy and Titus and all these other guys Dr. Luke and the rest of them traveling around and they say this is not just a flash-in-the-pan thing This is something that's been going on for a while.

I know people who believe in this Jesus Christ It's a critical wonderful mission that God gave him but it all looked like, you know snake eyes when they first ended up in these far-off places and Peter says Don't believe it. Here's what you are. Here's what you have well, this is the setup now for what is going to be the Exhortation portion of the letter he is going to now begin and really the there would be a great chapter break here maybe between verse 10 and verse 11 and Because a new emphasis he's Peter's going to kind of turn a corner from talking and encouraging and comforting and explaining Now just like the Apostle Paul does in his letters.

He lays a lot of doctrinal foundation. Then he says I Therefore beseech you brethren and you get into the exhortations and here's what you need to do Peter's going to do the same thing when we come back from the break