

The unique identity, position and destiny of believers

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Date: 01 August 2015

Preacher: Duncan MacPherson

[0 : 00] It's fellowships and the church is from on Tuesday at 7.30. There will not be a Ladies Bible study tomorrow night. The prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7.30 is in the council offices in the Old Primary School and that will be conducted by Callum McKinnon.

And then the services next Sunday will be led in the morning by Dr Angus McKellar and in the evening by Mr Alan Barclay. These are all the intimations.

Let us sing to God's praise. We shall sing in Gaelic. Verses from Psalm 95. Psalm 95 and we shall sing verses 6 and 7 which in English read Come let us bow down and worship.

Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock, under His care. Let us sing these verses to God's praise.

We shall remain seated. Let us sing these verses.

[1 : 28] Let us sing these verses.

Let us sing these verses.

Let us sing these verses.

Let us sing these verses.

Let us sing these verses.

[3 : 58] We thank you once more that we come into your presence tonight as your people. We thank you that you have called us to this place at this time, that we might declare your praises, that we might come into your presence to remind ourselves, Lord God, of our sinfulness and how far short we fall of your standards and how, Lord, we have failed you so often during this week.

And yet we also come to remind ourselves of how perfect the Lord Jesus Christ is, the one who fulfilled every demand of the law in every way, the one who is perfect in all his actions, in all his thoughts.

And, Lord, we thank you that we come in his name because he is the one who paid the ultimate price, the price of all our sins, all our failures, all our rebellions when he was hung upon the cross.

And, Lord, we think of those words from Scripture that say that cursing is everyone who hangs upon a tree. Lord, to think of the Son of Glory being made a curse, actually becoming sin, that, Lord God, we might become your righteousness.

It's something way beyond our understanding. And yet, Lord God, we simply accept it as your truth because you have revealed it to us. And, Lord God, it humbles us as we think of these things, that you would be willing to send your Son to die for us.

[5 : 30] When there was nothing in us worth saving. And, Lord God, you have taken us out of the mud and the mire and set our feet upon the rock. We thank you, Lord, that there is no other place that is safe other than on the rock, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray, Father, that we would see that tonight as we meet together. That we would be aware, once again, and in a deeper way, that there is nothing outside of Christ that can save us.

There is no one outside of Christ that can redeem us from our sin. He alone is the one and only Son of God. And the one and only sacrifice that was acceptable in your sight.

And we thank you, Lord, that because he paid that price, because he was that sacrifice, we do not need to come to you with the sacrifices of the blood of bulls and goats and sheep and lambs.

For, Lord, he paid that price once and for all. And, Lord, we have the great freedom that there is in Christ Jesus. And following a Saviour who has paid the price for us and who is the light of the world, who reveals the Father to us.

[6 : 45] And we thank you, O Lord, our God, that for all those who trust in Christ, there is no chance of losing their salvation. We thank you that we do not need to rely upon our faith to keep us safe.

For if we did, each of us would stumble and we would fall. For, Lord, our faith is not great. And yet, Lord, you are a mighty and a powerful God. And though our faith is weak, because we trust in you, you, Lord God, are the one who keeps us safe.

And we thank you that we have Jesus' promise that no one can snatch us out of his hand. We thank you, Lord, that he holds us tight. And we thank you that, Lord God, we are safe.

Lord, we pray that many others would come into the safety of the kingdom of God. That many would run into your kingdom and come into the tower where they are safe.

We thank you, O Lord, our God, that tonight your word is being preached in many different nations across the face of the earth. And the people are listening. People are drinking in the truth.

[7 : 58] That your spirit is working to call your people to salvation. To build up your people in their faith. And to declare your praises. To see that your name is glorified upon this earth.

And, Lord, as we think of the evil things that go on right about us. And as nations fight one another. And people within nations fight one another. We are immensely grateful, Lord, for the salvation that we have.

And we pray, Lord God, that in those places where the gospel is not welcome, we pray that you would raise up a church. You would raise up strong believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who would take the gospel of truth. And who would share it with all those round about them. And that, Lord, you, by your spirit, would work to change hearts and minds.

That those who, like the Apostle Paul, were so opposed to the truth. Would find themselves broken by the power of your spirit.

[8 : 59] And brought into that relationship with Christ. That they never imagined they would want. Far alone from actually having.

We thank you, Father, that you are the God who does mighty things. We thank you that you are the God who does mighty works. And we pray that we would see you working in mighty ways.

Not that we might delight solely in those works. But in you, our Father, receiving the glory that is due to your name upon this earth.

We pray for the leaders of nations. For those who rule over town councils. And who have positions of authority at work. That each and every one would be made aware.

That they are accountable for the power they hold. To you, the all-powerful God. And we ask, Father, that you would bless Christians. In positions of authority. That they would rule according to your word.

[9 : 59] That they would not bend with the wind. And they would not bend to the dictates of men. But that, Lord, at all times they would be like Daniel. Holding fast to your word.

Holding fast to your revelation. And living by it. And we pray, Father, for your blessing upon each and every one here. We pray that we would hold fast to your word. That we would hold fast to your word.

That we would remain faithful to you. And that in so doing, Lord, you would be pleased. To bless us and bless our community. And that, Lord, you would draw many more into the kingdom of Christ.

That, Lord, we might be a community that are wholly dedicated. To praising your name and bringing you glory. Through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen.

We shall sing once again from hymn 296. I am Luke. Hymn 296. Rejoice, the Lord is King.

[11 : 00] Your Lord and King adore. Mortals, give thanks and sing and triumph evermore. Lift up your heart. Lift up your voice. Rejoice. Again I say rejoice.

We have come together to rejoice in the Lord. So let us rejoice with our voices. And sing our praises to the living God. Our reading tonight is from 1 Peter.

1 Peter. We shall read from chapter 1 in verse 18. Through to chapter 2 in verse 10.

I also sent this to the house. It's verse 23 we'll read from. Verse 23. Sorry, verse 22.

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth. So that you have sincere love for your brothers. Love one another deeply from the heart. For you have been born again.

[12 : 13] Not of perishable seed. But of imperishable. Through the living and enduring word of God. For all men are like grass. And all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

The grass withers and the flowers fall. But the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word that was preached to you. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice.

And all deceit. Hypocrisy. Envy and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk. So that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living stone rejected by men. But chosen by God and precious to him. You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.

To be a holy priesthood. Offering spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in scripture it says, See, I lay a stone in Zion.

[13 : 17] A chosen and precious cornerstone. And the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.

And a stone that causes men to stumble. And a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message. Which is also what they were destined for.

But you are a chosen people. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. A people belonging to God. That you may declare the praises of him.

Who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people. But now you are the people of God. Once you have not received mercy. But now you have received mercy.

Amen. And may God bless this reading of this word. Now I'll ask Dolo McSween to come up and lead us in prayer. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[14 : 26] Amen. Amen. Amen.

They are always the desires of God together God has never cam legally How would he give them the world of horses to Zeus you If you are■ett I can come from your faith Love you have a sword and time to ease with every human being punished and once I need a faith.

The Martian As come I know our siblings, the ones that we eat to the evening.

This is our savior here for childhood, radiation is not it, it's what we know.

the my son s he Thank you.

[18 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[21 : 43] Thank you. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[23 : 31] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. The congregation Thy praise I will declare Praise ye the Lord Who do them fear Him glorify all ye The seed of Jacob Fear him all That is absurd and weak For he is thy son All of a Lord He hath picked his grace The deed

[25 : 25] The prophet did his face But there When he to him Did I Within the long The congregation My faith shall be Of thee My love before them That they fear Shall be there for By me I want us to look tonight At two verses found in chapter 2

Of Peter's first letter Chapter 2 verses 9 and 10 Where Peter writes But you are a chosen people A royal priesthood A holy nation A people belonging to God That you may declare the praises of him Who called you out of darkness Into his wonderful light 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 In writing his letter Peter speaks And focuses in on the issue of holiness From verse 13 and verse 15 in chapter 1 Where he says But just as he who called you is holy So be holy in all you do For it is written Be holy Because I am holy And he links the redemption

Of believers To Christ In verse 18 Where he says For you know That it was not with perishable things Such as silver or gold That you are redeemed From the empty way of life Handed down to you From your forefathers But with the precious blood of Christ A lamb without blemish or defect And in verse 4 of chapter 2 Peter automatically assumes That believers approach Christ In their faith In their walk with him Where he says If you come to him The living stone Rejected by men But chosen by God And precious to him He speaks of Christ As a living stone And goes on to speak About all believers As being stones Built into a holy priesthood Offering spiritual sacrifices To God

And he highlights how Christ Is that precious cornerstone The one in whom around all of us are built Which sadly so many people In the world have rejected But he contrasts But he contrasts The position of unbelievers In their disobedience With believers And the position That they have With these powerful And indeed majestic words That we have in verse 9 But you are a chosen people A royal priesthood A holy nation A people belonging to God And as I was thinking Of these words I was thinking I could simply Use these couplets Of a chosen people A royal priesthood A holy nation And then a people belonging to God As headings in and of themselves But after thinking on things A while I want to think on three headings tonight First of all

The believer's unique identity And then secondly The believer's unique position And thirdly The believer's unique destiny So if we think first of all Upon a unique identity And it is embodied In these two words Chosen people Peter says that we are A chosen people And if we think of the people groups Of the world Any number of individuals Are counted as a people When they have a shared culture When they have some kind Of a shared history And are interrelated In some way or another Although obviously As peoples get bigger And bigger The relationships become Somewhat tenuous But they have a definable entity About them Now Peter says We are a chosen people So what kind of people

[30 : 29] Is it that he is speaking to Right back at the beginning Of his letter He says that his letter Is to God's elect Strangers In the world And he goes on To list the places From where they came Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia And Bithynia We have a great swathe Of the ancient world Represented here And Peter Is referring to All the believers In Christ There As a people Now they are definitely Not simply Jews Living in these places Because there were many Gentile believers Already in the church And as we saw Reading from verse 18 There He says In chapter 1 For you know That it was not With perishable things Such as silver or gold That you were redeemed From the empty way of life And the doubt From your forefathers The empty way of life Would not be A way of describing The Jewish religion

Which had been revealed To them By Which had been revealed To Jews by God So there are obviously A vast number of Gentiles In the church To whom Peter was speaking And they were coming out Or they were a part themselves Of many different peoples And yet Peter here Says to the believers In Christ That while they are Strangers in the world And while they are Scattered All over the world They are in fact A people The only other example That I can really think In worldly terms Of a people Without A common Identity Were the Jews Themselves They kept Common customs Even when they Were disappeared From their own country For many hundreds And indeed Nearly 2,000 years They were able To identify To keep their identity As a people Through those

Common customs That they had And yet what do we Find in the church Amongst ourselves Today There is a great Diversity Of peoples Coming from Different places And this was The situation That Peter had In his day A great diversity Of peoples Within the church But the key thing There was That these people Did not come together Happensibly Into the church To make a bunch Of people Who had just been Brought together As some kind Of accident To create A new kind Of society But they were Chosen By God We see Importantly For us They were chosen And brought Into The kingdom Of God Chapter 1 And verse 20 Speaks of Christ He was chosen Before the creation Of the world And if we think Of Ephesians 1 And 4 Paul says He chose us In him I.e. in Christ

Before the creation Of the world And this is where Our common identity Comes together That enables Peter To call this Disparate group Of people From many different Backgrounds and cultures A people In and of themselves A Christian people Because They have the Lord Jesus Christ In common He is The centre Of their being The centre Of their worship And the one thing That ties Everybody together And if we think Of that verse In Ephesians And also Verse 4 Of chapter 2 In Peter Where He quotes Scripture To say See I lay a stone In Zion A chosen And precious Cornerstone Wrong verse here As you come to him The living stone Rejected by men But chosen by God And precious to him We see here

Christ being chosen By God As a living stone And us Being chosen By God To be a part Of his people And to be Living stones Built into The community The people Of God We have The redeemer And the redeemed Chosen together By the father From before Time began To create A new people The people Of God In a sinful And rebellious World Where the great Majority Of individuals Do not want To know him And that Interrelationship Comes In a very Special way And that is Through being born Of imperishable Seed Verse 23 You have been Born again Not of perishable Seed But of imperishable Through the living And enduring Word of God People are born Into

[35 : 34] The people Of God Through imperishable Seed Not the perishable Not through Normal Life But through Spiritual life Being granted To them So therefore We can say Quite clearly The people Of God Have a unique Identity But before That makes us Think of ourselves As being able To be proud We need to Remember As one commentator Put it That while the people Of God Are a chosen People They are not A choice People There was nothing In themselves To mend them To God Just as when And God Spoke to Abraham And when He chose The nation Of Israel To be His own Particular People He did not Choose them Because of anything That was good Within themselves But he chose Them simply Because he decided To set his

Love upon them The unique Identity Of being In Christ Secondly I want us To have a look At our unique Position We are a chosen People But he also Says the people Of God Are a royal Priesthood If we think Of the many Religions of the World today Most of them Have a priestly Class And Most of them You have the Priests Are a class That are set Apart To whom other People Must go When they have A problem When they want To approach God Or whether They are Wanting Inanimistic Religions To deal With issues Of spirits They will Approach A priest Or a shaman Who can Supposedly Make contact With spirits Or who can Perform a Sacrifice To enable Them to Turn away The wrath Of the Spirits

Or of God Himself And yet What Peter Reminds us Of here Is that All believers Are in One priest Are in One priest All belong To the Priesthood And therefore All believers Each and Every one Of us In Christ Is a priest What that Means quite Simply Is that Each and Every believer Is set Apart By God For a Particular Purpose Each and Every believer Is set Apart To be Holy Verse 5 He talks About being Built into A spiritual House To be a Holy priesthood We are set Apart to be Holy To be like God Himself And More I wouldn't Say more Importantly But equally Importantly In this Privileged Position Of being Priests Each and Every one Of us We have Direct access

To God The Father Through our Lord Jesus Christ Who himself Is described As the Great high Priest In Hebrews 4 and 14 Who has Gone through The heavens And who Is now At the Right hand Side of God And in Coming to God Through Christ We have No need Of worldly Priests None of Us needs To act In the way That the Old Testament Priesthood And Sacrifice The blood Of bulls And goats For each And every One of Us Has that Direct access To God The Father Through Christ The Son As the Result Of our Faith In Christ He refers Here To the The priesthood As being A royal Priesthood The priesthood Of various Religions Can have Great Importance But each And every One of Us Is serving Royalty We are

Serving The King The Lord Jesus Christ As we Go about Our work And what We are Told We are Doing As a Royal Priesthood As a Nation Of priests Is to Offer Spiritual Sacrifices To God Sacrifices Of praise As Paul Wrote As Paul As a Sacrifice And a Spiritual Act of Worship Before him We are Called to Serve With what We have So we Have a Unique Identity And we Also have A unique Position No one Else On the Earth Has the Believer's Position Of being A priest And serving In a Royal Priesthood No one Else Has the Believer's Access To God And as we

[40 : 36] All know We live in a Society Where Inclusion Is the Big thing We are all Supposed to be Inclusive And the Reality here That we Cannot escape Is that the Gospel itself Is exclusive No one Can serve The Lord Jesus Christ No one Can offer That sacrifice Of praise That Peter Is calling To unless Their faith Is in Christ It is only For those Who are Willing To put to Death Sin in Their lives For those Who are Willing To live For holiness As Peter Calls us To hear Who can Have that Access Into the Presence Of God So the Gospel Is undoubtedly An exclusive Gospel It excludes People And yet At the Same time It is Totally Inclusive Because the Only people Who are Excluded From the Privileges Of being In the Gospel Are those Who have Not accepted

Christ As Saviour And Lord Christ says That anyone Who can Come Anyone Can come Into his Presence Anyone Is free To trust In him And he Calls each And every One of us To put Our faith In himself That we Might have All these Privileges That are To be had In Christ A gospel That is Exclusive But a gospel That includes Everyone Who will Come to Christ God And the Third Point Is the Unique Destiny That we Have We see Here a Royal Priesthood And we Move on To a Holy Nation And also A people Belonging To God That you May declare The praises Of him Who called You out of Darkness Into his Wonderful Light If we Look first At this Holy Nation The first Question That kind Of comes Into our Head is How does A nation Differ From a People

Peter has Talked about Us being a Chosen people But he's Now talking About us Being a Holy Nation Looking up Wikipedia Yesterday I got some Interesting Definitions But essentially In looking at Nations Going beyond The cultural Nations Are also Political Entities They're also More defined By place If we think Of the Nations Of the Earth Largely Although 100% Defined By borders And we Can think Of our Own situation Here in Scotland For a Long time Scotland Was a Nation Without a Parliament But it Was a Nation Because it Had a Defined Boundary With England On the Other hand You had The Jewish People Were not A nation For many Centuries Because they Were scattered Among the Nations But today We have The nation Of Israel Which

Is Describes Itself As a Jewish Nation Because they Possessed The land Of Israel There is a Definite And much Stronger Link With the Land Or much Defined Link to The land Than simply We would Have in Relation To People Groups And nations Can have A combined Purpose And indeed Often do Have a Combined Purpose And if we Think of the Nation of the United States I was saying Earlier in Harris House I was reading A book Recently That referred To an Act of Congress Where the Congress Declared that America's Manifest Destiny Was to Expand From the East Coast Of the United States Over to The West Coast And to Reach the Pacific That's an Incredibly Brazen And arrogant Attitude I think When a People can

Actually put That down In their Laws But they Saw that As being Their Purpose In those Days of Spreading out Across this Great Continent And filling It with Their People And on The other Hand you Can have Nations that Are in Danger of Disintegrating If they Don't have A common Purpose I remember Some time Ago listening To an Article about Belgium And how There's two Separate Peoples Within Belgium And effectively They don't Get on Very well With one Another And they Were without A government For over A year At one Point Because The Different Parties Representing The Different Cultures Just Could Not Come Together To Form A Government And they Actually Raised the Question of When the Belgium Itself Might split Into two Countries And in a Memorable Phrase one Individual said The only Things we Have in Common in Belgium Are chocolate And the King And you

[45 : 38] Can't build A nation Around those And they They're Still Managing to Hang Together But Belgium Is in Danger Of breaking Up Because They don't Have that Combined Purpose They don't See a Great Destiny For their Nation Another thing About nations Are that They can Attract Outsiders Into them People who Move to a Country And decide They want To identify With that People Will take Out citizenship In that Country And become Part of That nation I can think Of Uriah The Hittite In the Days of Israel He identified Himself With the People of God And lived According to God's laws Because he Had seen The truth Being declared Through the Nation of Israel So we Then ask Ourselves What sort Of nation Or attributes Of a nation Does the Church of Jesus Christ

Have today And in Thinking upon These I thought First of Place Is an Obvious One In fact Every time We come To worship We are Coming into God's Presence Often we Think about God's Presence Coming into The place Where we Meet here Which is Very true But as we Sang in Psalm 84 This morning Each time We worship We in Fact enter Into the Courts Of God's House We enter Into his Presence And our Presence Our actual Home is In heaven With God And with Christ who Is seated At God's Right hand Side Paul himself Spoke of Our citizenship As members Of the church Our citizenship As being In heaven And that's In great Contrast To what Peter

Says In the First verse Of his Letter When he Talks About the Believers Being strangers In the world He could call He could call Them strangers In the world Because they Had been Called out Of the World And called Into the Church of Jesus Christ And they Had been Called to Citizenship In another Place Not of This world But the Citizenship Of the Kingdom Of heaven There we Have a Key attribute Of a Nation In the People Of Jesus Christ And we Can think To the Combined Purpose That the Church Has Jesus In his Prayer Told us All to Pray Your Kingdom Come We are Here To see The Kingdom Of God To see God's Rule Manifest Upon the Earth That is What we Are to Pray for The

Churches Of the World Today Are engaged In a Mammoth Task And working Together In many Different ways To reach Out to The world With the Good news Of Jesus Christ World Evangelisation Is probably Certainly is The biggest And most Ambitious Thing that Has ever Been done In the History of The Earth And it Is done By a Church That is Scattered Throughout The Nations Of the World Global Prayer Think of All the Churches And the People Who are Praying Tonight For Different People Groups For Different Missionaries For Different Churches For Different Nations We all Have A Combined Purpose And in Verse 9 Going beyond Those Verses About A Holy Nation And the People Belonging To God Peter Says That you May Declare The Praises Of Him Who Called You Out Of Darkness Into His Wonderful Light We are

Here To Declare God's Praises And more Than simply Being a Nation We are A Holy Nation As we Touched On Before Set Apart The Defining Characteristic Of Our Nation Who Is Holiness Can Anyone Think Of A Nation To Which We Would Say Had Set It Apart To Be Holy I Can't Think Of Any In History Although Some Were Greatly Blessed By God At Times And Were Definitely More Conformed To Biblical Standards Than We Are Today But No Nation Even The Nation Of Israel Has Managed To Be Truly Holy Although The Nation Of Israel In Biblical Times Was Set Apart To Be Holy For God's Service And Before We Leave The Thought Of A Nation The Last Thing I Would Just Say Is That God's Church While Having Characteristics Of A Nation Is Not An Empire Empires

[50 : 41] Are Built When Nations Get Beyond Themselves And Want To Build Empires To Become Ever More Powerful And Way Of Life And Impose Their Laws Upon Other Peoples But The Church Of Jesus Christ Will Always Be Described As A Holy Nation Because Each And Everyone Who Enters Into That Church Comes Into It Because Of Their Free Will They Are Not Forced Into The Church But They Delight To Come In Service And To Identify With God's People To Identify With The Holy Nation Second Aspect Of The Unique Destiny Of The People Of God Is In This Verse Belonging To God A People Belonging To God God No No Worldly Nation Belongs To God Whatsoever The Nations Are In His Hand But The Nations

Themselves Do Not Belong To Him In The Way That Believers Do We Belong To God Think Of What Paul Said You Are Not Your Own You Are Bought At A Price He Goes On Further And Describes The People Of Christ Has Been Slaves To Christ That Might Sound A Slight Contrast To Just What I Was Saying A Minute Ago About Not Being An Empire Not Being Forced Into The Kingdom The Picture Paul Was Thinking Of There Was The One Taken From The Old Testament Of A Slave Who Loved His Master So Much He Didn't Want To Be Set Free To Serve Anyone Else He Wanted To Serve His Master Forever more So He So That He Is Clear He Had Freely Chosen To Remain With His Master Forever More And We Have A Greater Destiny Than

All The Nations Of The World For Peter Tells Us Here We Were Called Out Of Darkness Into His Wonderful Light If We Think Back To Where We Were And Think Forward To Where We Are Going We Can Think Of The Wonderful Destiny That We Have In Christ We Could Not See The Living Stone Jesus Christ In Verses 7 And 8 It Talks Of The Stone The Builders Rejected Has Become The Capstone And Which Believer Here Tonight Has Not At Some Point In Their Life Rejected Christ Before They Came To Faith In Him Because They Were In Darkness Each And Every One Of Us Was Unable To See The Stone Or If We Came Up Against Christ We Could Not See How Beautiful He Was And How Attractive He Was And How Perfect He Was In Every Way But Now As Believers In Christ We Can See Just How Precious He Is As

Peter Describes Him In Verse 7 He Calls Talks Of Has Been Called Out Of Darkness And Into His Wonderful Light How Many People Can Testify That They Were Called Out Of A Deep Darkness And Into The Light Of Christ Lost And Seemingly Without Hope In This World And Yet In The Darkness God Reached In And Brought Them Out And Into The Light Of Christ As I Was Thinking Of This I Was Thinking On The That Reflect So Many Believers Of Being In The Light And It's This Thought Of Continuing Sin And Continuing Evil In The World And Why Doesn't God Just Quickly Come And Do Away With All The Evil One Thought One Thought Is If We Had Done It A Few Years Earlier None Of Us Would Be Here Today

Because We With Ourselves Have Been Lost And A Second Thought Is If We Think Of These Days For Which We Long This Summer When We Have Wall To Wall Sunshine The Days Are Beautiful And The Light Is Wonderful To Be Out In The Sun But On Other Days If You Had A Bit Of Rain And A Bit Of Cloud In The Sky And You See The Light And You See The Shadow On The Landscape The Light Lights Up The Landscape All The More Strongly When There Is Darkness When There Is Some Shadow To Be Seen It Reveals More Landform That Is There And God's Light Shining In A Dark World Reveals More Of God's Purposes Round About Us God's Light Shining Through His Church Reveals More Of His Purposes To The World And Therefore Is Used By God To Call More People Out Of The Darkness And Into The Light And Our

[55 : 43] Manifest Destiny Our Great Destiny Our Unique Destiny Is That We Will Reach Ultimate Perfection In Glory Sin Will Be Taken Away And We Will Be In God's Presence Forevermore There Will Be No Nation Ever Happier Than The Church Of Jesus Christ In God's Kingdom For Eternity And We Will Spend That Eternity Getting To Know God Learning More About Him And Also Getting To Know Other Believers One Of The Things That Struck Me When I Was Looking Up Definitions Of A Nation Was One Common For The Most Part Members Of A Nation Remain Strangers To Each Other And Will Never Likely Meet But Each And Every One Of Us As Believers Are Are Are Are God's Presence And Therefore I Have No Doubt That We

Will Meet Every Other Believer In The Kingdom Of God And Get To Know Them In The Most Amazing Way As We See Christ In Their Lives And Understand More Of How Christ Saved Them And What Christ Did In Them To Make Them Holy On Earth And To Make Them Perfectly Holy In Heaven No Wonder Why We Are Brought From Darkness To Light To Declare God's Praises We Are Here Today To Be A Testimony To The World To Attract The World From That Darkness And Into God's Light Fantastic Privileges For The Believer In Christ That Then Leaves The Question Of All Those Tonight Who Are Here Who Are Not In Christ Is There Anything To Stop You From Coming To Faith In Christ Is There Anything

That Should Truly Hold You Back When You Can Be Part Of The Chosen People The Royal Priesthood The Holy Nation A People Delonging To God Himself With That Unique Identity With That Unique Position In The World And With That Unique Destiny There Are Many Who Keep Holding Back From Coming To Christ But The Gospel Call Is Clear To Each And Every One That Christ Is Calling You To Come Now Now Is The Time Of God's Saviour And Now Is The Day Of Salvation I'm Thinking Of This Metaphor Or This Picture Of Being In Darkness And Coming Into God's Wonderful Light Reminded Me Of The Great Hymn Of Charles Wesley Which Illustrates Things So Well And Can It Be That I Should Gain

An Interest In The Saviour's Blood Verse Four He Says Long My Prison Spirit Lay Fast Bound In Sin And Nature's Night Thine I Defused A Quickening Ray I Woke The Dungeon Flamed With Light My Chains Fell Off My Heart Was Free I Arose Went Forth And Followed Thee God Shined That Light Into Charles Wesley His Life And It Was Like A Dungeon Being Filled With The Light Of God He Described As His Chains Falling Off And His Heart Becoming Free If you Feel like You're In A Dark Place Tonight And You Have Wanted To Be a Christian For A Long Time Then Call Call Call To God To God To Shine The Light Of His Gospel Into Your Life That You Might See Christ And Who He Is You Might See

Him In All His Perfection To Be Able To Understand Who He Is And Then To Respond And Trust In Him As Your Savior There Is No Greater Privilege Than To Be A Believer No Greater Privilege Than To Be A Christian And It's My Prayer Each And Every One Of Us Will Know Those Privileges Let Us Pray Lord Our God We Thank You For The Great Blessings That There Are In Being In Jesus Christ We Thank You That For Whatever Reason You Are Not Satisfied Simply To Save Us But Lord You Have Put Your People In An Exalted Place Lord You Have Given Us The Most And The Best Of Everything Lord You Could Have Saved Us And Left Us A Long Distance From You Yet You Have Brought Us To Yourself Into Your Very Presence Lord You Prepare A

[60 : 44] Place For Each And Every Believer That Lord When We Die On This Earth We Will Instantly Enter Into The Place That You Have Prepared For Us And Lord We Will Have No Thought Any Longer For The Citizens Of The Nations That We Have On The Earth For The Nations Themselves Will Disappear But Lord Your Word Stands Forever And Your Kingdom Is An Eternal Kingdom We Pray Our Father That You Give Us All The Grace To Enter Into That Kingdom And To Declare Your Praises As You Have Called Us To For You Indeed Have Called Us Out Of Darkness Into Your Wonderful Light Into The Freedom And The Liberty Of The Gospel And We Pray Lord That We Would Live Up To That Freedom That We Would Be A Holy People Set Apart

For Your Service Seeking To Serve You Wherever You Places In Our Daily Lives And Wherever You May Call Us To In The Years Ahead And We Pray Lord God That We Would Bring Glory To Your Name As We Meet Together As We Declare Your Praises To An Unbelieving World And We Pray That Through Those Praises Your Word Would Be Exalted Your Name Would Be Glorified And Many Sinners Would Come To Christ In Whose Name We Pray Amen Now we Shall Close By Singing Hymn 374 Hymn 374 A Suitable Hymn Of Praise To Close With Now It Was Pointed Out To Me That This

Hymn To God Be The Glory Great Things He Has Done In The Red Hymn Book The Chorus Isn't In The Book But I Think From Having Sung It Before Many As A Time We Will Remember The Chorus But I'll Just Read The Chorus Praise The Lord Praise The Lord Let The Earth Hear His Voice Praise The Lord Praise The Lord Let The People Rejoice O Come To The Father Through Jesus The Son And Give Him The Glory Great Things He Has Done Hymn 374 In The Church Hymn Book To God Be The Glory