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The Privilege of Being Privileged

Romans, Part XII

Romans 3:1-2

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Jews under sin (cf. Acts 7:51-53)

II. A Litany of Objections

- What then is the advantage of being a Jew? (3:1-2)
- Jewish unbelief doesn't nullify God's faithfulness, does it? (3:3-4)
- God's ability to turn unrighteousness to His glory doesn't undermine His righteous judgment or human responsibility, does it? (3:5-8)
- So are Jews better than Gentiles? (3:9-20)

III. The Privilege of Being a Jew

A. What then is the advantage of being a Jew? (cf. Jn 4:22)

¹What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? ²Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

B. Much in every way! (3:2a cf. 9:3-5)

Jesus Himself declared to the Samaritan woman, "*Salvation is of the _____*" (Jn 4:22). In other words, Jesus Himself acknowledged the privilege of being Jewish. Paul does the same thing.

³For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. (Rom 9:3-5)

C. Entrusted with the oracles of God (3:2b cf. 2:17-20)

The _____ privilege God gave the Jews *was entrusting them with the oracles of God.*

IV. Responding Righteously to Privilege

A. Jewish Privilege (cf. Dt 4:5-10; Ps 147:19-20)

⁵Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. ⁶Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? ⁸And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law, which I set before you this day? ⁹Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, ¹⁰especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'

God uniquely privileged Israel. As Psalm 147 declares:

¹⁹He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. ²⁰He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!

B. Inescapable Privilege (Pr 10:15; 12:4; 19:6-7; 20:7; 22:29; 1 Pet 2:9-10)

⁹But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, 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; ¹⁰who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Pet 2:9-10)

Those outside of Christ do not have the same privileges as Christians. So how ought we to respond? By praising God. That which is true of our identity as Christians is true in other areas of life. God has created a world in which there are myriad inequalities. **Privilege is inescapable.**

- Some people are wealthier than others (Pr 10:15; 19:6-7).
- Some people come from better families than others (Pr 17:6; 20:7).
- Some spouses are better than others (Pr 12:4; 19:14).
- Some people are more skilled than others (Pr 22:29).
- Young and old have different privileges (Pr 20:29).

C. Thankfulness, Generosity, and Privilege

Biblically the problem is not that we possess privileges; the problem is that we fail to respond to them rightly. We abuse our privileges. *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s”* (Ex 20:17). Cultural Marxism says that *the problem is the privileges*. Hence, we must eliminate the _____. The Scriptures insist the problem is the heart; we envy and covet what others rightly possess. Hence, our _____ must be changed.

1. Thank God for your privileges (and others’) [Dt 8:7-10]

First, thank God for your privileges. Don’t feel _____ for them; thank God for them. Don’t _____ what you don’t have; thank God for what you do have. Solomon reminds us, *“A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones”* (Pr 14:30). Further, he says, *“All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast”* (Pr 15:15).

2. Serve God with your privileges (Dt 4:32-36)

[Privileges!] ³²“For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any great thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard. ³³Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? ³⁴Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him. ³⁶Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. ³⁷And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, ³⁸driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day. [Responsibilities!] ³⁹Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. ⁴⁰You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

3. Be generous amid your privileges (1 Tim 6:17-19)

¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

V. Conclusion