

II. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“The Elect Exiles, Part 1”
I Peter 1:1–2
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August 20, 2017 • Morning Sermon

This is our second study in our series on I Peter and I have some book recommendations if you want to do further study on I Peter. I have a 101, 201 and 301. My 101 recommendation is Edmund Clowney’s book titled *The Message of I Peter* from John Stott’s *The Bible Speaks Today* series. My 201 is Paul Gardner’s book titled *1 and 2 Peter and Jude* and the 301 book is R.C. Sproul’s book titled *1–2 Peter: Be All the More Diligent to Make Your Calling and Election Sure*.

I actually want to start this study by looking at Genesis 23:1–4 says [1] *Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.* [2] *And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.* [3] *And Abraham rose up from before his dead and said to the Hittites,* [4] *“I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”* This is the Word of God.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His word be preached for you.

I am so excited about this series in I Peter. Peter is taking the time in this text to identify two entities – himself and his audience. This is the way they do it in the first century. They don’t put their name at the end of the letter but at the beginning. So then as you read the letter you’d read it knowing who wrote it to you for who wrote it effects the way it was written.

There was a dangerous moment in my lifetime when my wife wanted to clean out some closets in our home. In one of our closets was a shoebox full of letters written from my wife to me that were bound by a rubber band. The reason this is such a dangerous moment is the possibility that as my wife and I go through them, we come across a letter that had not been opened. My wife Cindy and I met the last week of July and got her to agree to engagement by October and then we were married by January. In college I received a letter from her every day. When I received mail I would look in the upper left hand corner to see who it was from for who it was from was very important. When I would see Cindy’s name on the top left corner I was going to open it and praise the Lord that every letter I received from her had been opened and read.

God loves you and He has written 66 love letters to you. Are any of them unopened? God used 40 plus human authors to write these letters and God used Peter to write three of those 66 books. The Word inscripturated can be compared in analogous to the Word incarnate. Jesus came into this world over 2000 years ago as God and Man, fully God and fully Man without sin and the same thing is true with the Word inscripturated. This is fully God’s Word and fully used human authors. He used who they were, what their background was, what He was doing in their life, how they were raised and His providence in their lives. That is fully human yet without error because God is superintended as the Author over the authors.

I know this is one phrase – Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ – but it’s important. In the last study I noted this was important for two reasons. One as you read the three books Peter wrote (I & II Peter and Mark through John Mark his secretary) we see things about the human

author that God is sovereignly using to give us His Word so we take the time to look at that. Secondly, we take the time to look at the author because the way He worked on Peter tells us a lot about Peter and how He is working on us as well through how He works on Peter.

The question we posed in the last study was how does a man named Simon, brash and tempestuous, called by Christ as a Disciple, become Peter, bold and humble, sent by Christ as an Apostle? We looked at 16 encounters of Peter with Jesus in the Gospels and we saw in each one that God would break him and make him so He could use him. There is more information given to us about Peter in the Bible so I had to be selective with the encounters I chose. God does the same thing with us as He does with Peter. When God saves us by His grace He breaks us to make us to use us for His glory and our joy. The objective of God's work in our life requires Him to break us but brokenness is not the objective. The objective is salvation whereby He makes us to use us for His glory and our joy. So we see this as we look at Peter and how God takes him from where he was (brash and tempestuous) to make him (bold and humble) and use him for His glory.

The text for this study is I Peter 1:1–2 which says *[1] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

I'd like to retranslate the phrase 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ' for you which would also be accurate and that is 'Peter, Jesus Christ's Apostle.' In other words, the 'of' is a signal of ownership which means Jesus owns Peter (He owns me). He made me, saved me and redeemed me. I am who I am by the grace of God. We know Peter is from Bethsaida and how interesting that many have said there was a mistake in the Bible here claiming there was no Bethsaida and two years ago they found it. Have you ever noticed how long it takes archeology, philosophy, sociology and anthropology to climb the mountain of theology? They finally get there and God was right all along. Peter had a house in Capernaum which is where he and his wife lived with his mother in law. We saw from Paul in I Corinthians 9:5 that Peter had a wife that was likely travelling with him like the brothers of Jesus did also. Peter had a brother named Andrew and a fishing partnership with his brother plus James and John.

I prefer the translation of the phrase 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ' because there is something here we don't want to miss. Don't you believe the twelve were very privileged because of God's grace to be where they were? Of the twelve, Peter was preeminent and privileged among the twelve who were preeminent and privileged. The first time Jesus meets Peter He tells him his name is going to change from Simon to Peter, a rock, Cephas. So the first time Peter meets Jesus he becomes singled out in a sense. I'm fully aware that the Roman church has built something around Peter (i.e. the predicate of the Pope and papal authority) and I think they are wrong for various reasons, but Peter is put in a position of privilege among the twelve.

We see this privilege of Peter in various places in Scripture. When Jarius' daughter was healed Peter had the privilege to be a part of this. Matthew 16:17–18 says *[17] And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. [18] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* On the Mount of Transfiguration we see in Matthew 17:4–5, *[4] And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for*

Elijah.” [5] He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” Peter is the one who gets his taxes paid from what was in the mouth of a fish and I don’t remember any other disciples getting theirs paid.

There are so many times we see Peter in this privileged position. Another is in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asks Peter, James and John to come and pray with Him. After the resurrection Jesus makes four personal appearances to people and one of them is to Peter. At the Sea of Galilee after the Resurrection it is Peter who Jesus says this to in John 21:15–19, *[15] When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” [16] He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” [17] He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. [18] Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” [19] (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”*

Yet when Peter writes he says ‘Peter, an apostle...’ He is bold and humble. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, he doesn’t write ‘the’ apostle or primary apostle or chief apostle but an apostle of Jesus Christ. So now that we have seen who the author is we turn to the audience of who he writes to and ultimately he writes to us. Who are we? Those he is writing to he calls elect exiles. Again, I Peter 1:1–2 says *[1] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

In this study we’ll focus on his use of ‘exiles’ and then in the next study we’ll focus on what it means to be the elect. Peter says two things about exiles. One is that we are exiles of the Dispersion and then those he is speaking to, he speaks through them to us and they were people of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. He gives their spiritual residency first – those in the Dispersion and then their physical location next, the areas he gives next. Then Peter will tell them what it means to be elect which is *[2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood...* and that we’ll cover in the next study. A man asked me one time ‘do you believe in election?’ and I said ‘It’s in the Bible, I believe it.’ Now, what does the Bible teach about election? Again, we’ll look at that in the next study.

Now ‘exiles’ is an interesting word. It is only used three times in the New Testament. One place is in our text for this study in I Peter 1:1. Sometimes this word is translated in the Bible as stranger, alien, sojourner and pilgrim. All of those are certainly appropriate but I love the ESV translation to use the word exiles. I think this word has a significant dynamic that is crucial for us today. A second place this word is used is in I Peter 2:9–12 which says *[9] But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

[11] Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

What does Peter mean by the use of exiles here? Do you see how important it is? You have to get this right in order to move in the right direction in sanctification and that is to keep yourself from the passions of the flesh. You keep yourself from the passions of the flesh when you are exiles and it's directly related to your path, growth and Gospel holiness in sanctification. Secondly, he says it governs the way you live in anticipation of the second coming and what will happen on the judgment day as people will glorify God in the way they lived as an exile, sojourner on the way to glory. This is crucial.

A third time the word exile is used in the New Testament, which perhaps will help us even more, is in Hebrews 11:13–16 which says *[13] These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. [14] For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. [15] If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. [16] But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*

Here he is looking at the Old Testament saints for us to get a lesson. When you were not saved you were a citizen of a homeland and a nation – in a kingdom in the kingdoms of this world. When you got saved you became a citizen of the Kingdom of God, looking for another homeland, another city, desiring that city and homeland. You are still in the place you were saved but something has changed for you are now a sojourner and an alien on your way Home. You are now working for the King of your Kingdom in the kingdoms of this world but your Home is in a new heavens and a new earth – a city prepared by God. Your physical life is still there but your spiritual citizenship is in the Kingdom of God, anticipating its City and coming, for by faith is the way you now live. And the kingdoms of this world no longer own you. The King does. You may rightly love the nations and ethnicities that you are a part of but they don't own you. You are now a Royal Nation, a nation of priests and a nation that belongs to the King. That is who you are.

If that is grasped by God's people, there will be an exciting, distinctive difference that we would make in an era like this. You wouldn't find us falling prey to nationalism or ethnicism or racism. Those are not our identities. We are Christians, joint heirs with Christ, a royal nation and the best thing for us is to see this in our nation where in our midst is a people who are not a people who have become the people of God. You can't describe us demographically or socially or racially. You can only describe us as one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all. Does that mean I don't love my country? Absolutely not, but it doesn't mean that my country doesn't own me, Jesus does. I will honor Caesar but Jesus is Lord. I will live as God has called me to live and will obey all human authorities and institutions and respect customs but I have an allegiance and affection that is not defined racially, ethnically, or even nationally so there won't be racism, ethnicism or nationalism among God's people if they understand who they are – which are sojourners and aliens, citizens in the Kingdom and citizens of the Dispersion.

It's important to understand what Peter is talking about concerning the Dispersion. The Diaspora occurred in the Old Testament. Two times God brought judgment upon His people and

dispersed them. One time He used the nation of Assyria to disperse in judgment the ten northern tribes. Then He used the nation of Babylon to disperse the two southern tribes in the Babylonian Captivity. They were dispersed in the hand of God's disciplinary judgment. Now Peter is telling us that we are exiles of the Dispersion. In the Old Covenant the dispersion was an act by the hand of God in judgment upon His people. In the New Covenant the dispersion is an act by the hand of God in salvation, ministry and mission for God's people. In other words, I was saved out of a nation into the Kingdom of God kept in that nation, I am of the Dispersion and until Jesus comes I'm there to bring the Gospel to all the nations and that is the way I am to see myself.

So how did Peter get to know these people in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia? There is evidence that Peter made at least one if not two mission trips to this area which today is Turkey. Where did he start knowing them? The Gospel comes to Jerusalem and in the day of Pentecost the Spirit of God is poured out. Peter begins to preach and then we see this in Acts 2:5–10 which says *[5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. [7] And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome.*

So some of the people he is writing to in I Peter first probably heard him when he preached at Pentecost and then went home. Other people are being converted and now he is writing to these churches filled with Jews and Gentiles. He is telling them that now they are saved their citizenship is in the Kingdom of God and they are now sojourners and exiles. It doesn't mean they go turn in their citizenship here on this earth but it is how you are to perceive yourself. We perceive and identify ourselves as a Christian, a citizen of the Kingdom of God, I belong to King Jesus, a member of His Church which is a colony of the Kingdom and the kingdoms of this world which is an embassy of His Kingdom and from His Church with His people we are sojourners and aliens. And we are on mission, on message, in ministry as strangers and aliens. We are not owned by these nations but we bring King Jesus to these nations and we want to bring these nations to King Jesus until He comes again and that is how we see ourselves.

What would happen if that view of ourselves were seen among God's people and all that it would eradicate in partialities in our midst, as God's people were salt, light and leaven in a nation? It doesn't matter where we are citizens in this world but together we are sojourners and aliens bringing the Gospel to every nation in this world, loving those nations rightly so but allegiance and affections singularly and supremely to King Jesus and bringing that to His glory throughout this world. If every Christian had this view of themselves what would this world look like?

Here is the takeaway. We will never live as we ought **in grace for Christ** without the knowledge of who we are **by grace in Christ** and what we are **through grace for Christ**. This is what Peter is telling us. Who am I by grace in Christ? I am elected by the grace of God with the Father knowing me before I existed, the Son of God making me right with God, the Spirit of God sanctifying and bringing me to God, in which the Father initiated all of this out of His love before I ever existed. God's sovereign, electing grace has laid hold of me. Because He bought

me and brought me I am His and now that I am His in His Kingdom in the kingdoms of this world then I am a sojourner. I am an exiled elect.

If I do that then that is how the world is going to see me. I know by God's grace we have had awakenings and revivals in this country so that in our recent past Christians have been appreciated but that is not the majority report. We are the off-scouring of the world. Jesus says "If you love Me, the world will hate you...they persecuted Me and they will persecute you" (Matthew 10:22, John 15:18). Christians normally do not get parades. They get persecution so expect it, embrace it. I'm not saying pray for it but pray for ourselves while in it. That is what we expect to be exiled, to be called outsiders, to be put outside. As the elect of God I belong to Him and if I know who I am in Christ I have a new heart, a new record, a new family, a new Kingdom, a new home, a new city then I will know who I am to be for Christ and what I am to be through the grace of God at work in my life.

Who am I in Christ? I am the elect. I am a saint. I am sprinkled with the blood. I am sanctified and sealed with the Spirit. I am loved by the Father. His relentless, redeeming love has laid hold of me. I belong to Him and He belongs to me. Praise His Name forevermore! Now what am I to be for my Father? I am an ambassador of the Kingdom of God, an alien and sojourner in this world. I have work to do for Him until I go to be with Him or He comes for me. That is the way I see myself.

Does this mean I have to give up my relationships within the nations? No, it does not mean that at all but Jesus is not the handmaiden of a country. Jesus is a King. He is my King and I am bringing my King with the Gospel of the Kingdom to this nation. I am saying 'Surrender to Him who will save you for He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.' He is our King. You may decide that you are an outsider. It's okay. When I was apart from Christ I was a citizen and then God saved me. I'm not giving up the citizenship papers here but you need to understand spiritually how you see yourself.

I see myself as a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven waiting for my King and Savior but I'm not waiting in passivity for He has a job for me to do as an exile, stranger, sojourner and ambassador for Christ here until He comes again. Therefore when you look at me I'm on a green card here. My passport spiritually is not stamped 'American' but it's stamped 'Jesus.' You have no idea how this benefits this nation for me to be that. You get a lot better deal now before I was converted but that is how I am now and how I'm going to live by God's grace as I mature in that until He comes again. So you may want to marginalize me and I know you'll see me as an outsider but I'm coming inside. I'm going to be inside the culture even though the culture says I'm an outsider. Because I know I'm the elect of God, when I'm inside the culture, by God's grace I don't want the culture inside of me.

I want to be in the world but not of the world. While I'm in the world I want to be a stranger, alien serving Him with all of my heart. When you get older this gets easier for you begin to know more on that side of glory (in heaven) than you know here on earth. Although what I have here is great but you will increasingly get a lot more there as you get older. Those who are a little younger, when you know your Savior and His electing, redemptive, relentless love for you, there is an effusive, expulsive and expanding love for Christ that will bring you to being owned by Christ and not this world or some race or nation. Our homeland is the Kingdom and we wait for our Savior.

Remember what I read from Genesis at the beginning of this study. Genesis 23:1-4 says *[1] Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. [2] And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah*

and to weep for her. [3] And Abraham rose up from before his dead and said to the Hittites, [4] "I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

They said they would give Abraham the land to bury his wife and Abraham said 'no you won't.' Why did he say they wouldn't give him the land? It was because he knew he was a stranger and an exile and he wasn't going to give them any ownership of him. With the resources his King gives him, he was going to pay for it. Here you don't own me. I will honor you and I will respect you but only Jesus owns me. I belong to Him, I long to live for Him and follow Him.

In closing I had picked out about five different hymns that sing of this truth but then the song I sang during my vacation Bible school days came back to me and it is sufficient here. The hymn is titled *This World is not My Home* and it goes like this;

*This world is not my home I'm just a passing through
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue
The angels beckon me from heaven's golden shore door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

There was a time I was home but not anymore. I'm looking for my home. I can't wait to be in my home. There is one thing in this hymn that is not quite right and that is that I'm not just passing through for I have a job to do until I pass through. We are strangers and exiles on mission in ministry on message for the King. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in this Jesus, for this Jesus and with Him. Thank You for helping us understand through Peter how we are to see ourselves in the electing love of Jesus Christ and in the sovereign placement of Christ, now redeemed in the nations from the nations into a Royal Nation to be an ambassador as a stranger and alien in this world for Jesus Christ, but God we are not going to isolate, withdraw or go to a Christian commune and just wait for Jesus to come. No, we're going to be in the world but please God, by Your electing grace, don't let the world in us. We want to be of You, for You who we are by grace and what we are in grace – strangers and aliens on the mission in our nation to all the nations for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Power Point

A MAN CALLED PETER

How does a man named Simon, brash and tempestuous, called by Christ as a Disciple, become Peter, bold and humble, sent by Christ as an Apostle?

When God saves us by His grace, He breaks us, to make us, to use us for His glory and our joy.

A PEOPLE CALLED ELECT EXILES

Exiles who are...

1. *Of the Dispersion – Spiritual Residency*

2. *In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia – Physical Residency*

Elect who are...

1. *According...*

2. *In...*

3. *For...*

LIFE TAKEAWAY

We will never live as we ought in grace for Christ without knowing who we are by grace in Christ and what we are through grace for Christ.

FIRST PETER IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

THE ELECT AND THE EXILE

The Prologue (1:1–2)

I. The Gospel Doxology (1:3–12)

II. The Gospel Call (1:13–21)

III. The Gospel Community (1:22–2:3)

IV. The People of God as the Temple of God (2:4–8)

V. The People of God as the Elect of God (2:9–10)

VI. The People of God as the Pilgrims of God (2:11–12)

VII. The People of God and the Life for God (2:13–4:13)

VIII. The People of God as the Flock of God (5:1–11)

The Epilogue (5:12–14)

THEME VERSES

...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (I Peter 3:14–15)