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SPRING SERIES 2022 – WEEK 1

1 Peter 1:1-2: Aliens and Strangers

To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia... – 1 Peter 1:1 ESV

- **Not of this world**

*Beloved, I urge you as **sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. – 1 Peter 2:11 ESV*

- Peter refers to his readers in fairly strange terms
 - aliens and strangers* – NASB
 - foreigners and exiles* – NIV
 - temporary residents and foreigners* – NLT
 - sojourners and exiles* – ESV
 - strangers and pilgrims* – KJV

- He is addressing a specific group of people living in a particular geographic region

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are **elect exiles of the Dispersion** in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 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. – 1 Peter 1:1-2 ESV*

- So far, he's used what appears to be three different terms to describe these people:
 - **exiles** – *parepidēmos* – “foreigners”
 - **aliens** – *paroikos* – “outsider”
 - **strangers** – *parepidēmos* – “foreigners”
- They are living in the territory controlled by the Roman Empire



- They are living in what is today modern-day Turkey
- And they are outside the regions where Paul went on his missionary journeys



- The Apostle Paul never made up it into...

- ...Bithynia
- ...Pontus
- ...Cappadocia
- ...or Northern Galatia
- And he bypassed most of Asia
- So, how did these people hear the gospel and become believers?
 - Many of them must have been present at Pentecost when the church began

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” – Acts 2:5-7 ESV

*And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and **Cappadocia**, **Pontus** and **Asia**, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” – Acts 2:8-11 ESV*

- These people had heard the gospel and responded

...and there were added that day about three thousand souls. – Acts 2:41 ESV

- And they had eventually returned home to...
Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia
- But their **transformation** would result in **alienation**
- They returned home as **aliens** and **strangers**
- Because their **citizenship** had changed

*...there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth. **But we are citizens of heaven**, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. – Philippians 3:18-20 NLT*

- The fact is, we’re all aliens and strangers
- But what or who are we alienated from?

*Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands — remember that you were at that time **separated** from Christ, **alienated***

*from the commonwealth of Israel and **strangers** to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.* – Ephesians 2:11-12 ESV

*And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then **you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...* – Ephesians 2:17-20 ESV

- Something had radically changed

The Greek terms for strangers and aliens in this verse reveal the desperation of those outside of Christ. “Strangers” translates the plural form of the word **xenos** — a person who lived in a foreign land without any rights except those given by a treaty. “Aliens” is from the plural of the term **paroikos** — a resident alien, one who lived more permanently in a foreign country than a **xenos**, but still only had few rights. In Jesus, believers are no longer vulnerable and homeless. They have citizenship in a heavenly country, a place where God guarantees divine protection forever. – www.ligonier.org – June 13, 2011

*All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that **they were foreigners and nomads here on earth**. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland.* – Hebrews 11:13-16 NLT

- The here-and-now versus the hereafter
 - How to live as an occupant of earth and a citizen of the Kingdom
 - But NOT be so heavenly-minded that we’re no earthly good

*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 open door
And I can’t feel at home
In this world anymore.*

- **Who wrote 1 Peter?**
 - A hotly debated topic

- Some argue that...
 - o The Greek is too sophisticated for a fisherman
 - o There are too few references to the historical Jesus
 - o And - The persecution of Christians by Rome came well after Peter's death
- We're going to stick with Peter as the author
 - o Along with most of the early church fathers
 - o And based on the evidence within the book

*So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and **a witness of the sufferings of Christ**, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed... – 1 Peter 5:1*
ESV

- **Who was the audience?**

*To **those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion** in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia... – 1 Peter 1:1* ESV

- Literally – “in the diaspora”

The Greek term διασπορά (diaspora, “dispersion”) refers to Jews not living in Palestine but “dispersed” or scattered among the Gentiles. But here it is probably metaphorical, used of Gentile Christians spread out as God's people in the midst of a godless world. –
– **NET Bible** study notes

“They were predominantly Gentiles who were having to live out their new found faith in the middle of a secular and, oftentimes, hostile culture. Peter refers to them as “elect exiles of the Dispersion” to stress the temporary and alien nature of their status as followers of Christ.” – Ken Miller, Devotionary™ on 1 Peter

exiles – *parepidēmos*

“Parepidemoi are persons who belong to some other land and people, who are temporarily residing with a people to whom they do not belong...” – Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude*

elect – *elektos* – picked out, chosen

“God chose them because He determined beforehand that they would believe the gospel.” – Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 Peter*

- Foreknowledge involves **choice** and **determination**
 - o This is the basis of Peter's entire letter
 - o He wants them to know that their entire situation has been predetermined by God
 - o Including their eternal and temporal state
 - o Their election included **salvation** and **suffering**

“These people were living in difficult circumstances. They were most likely Gentiles who had converted to Christianity and were now suffering the unexpected consequences of their decision. Much to their surprise, the “good news” of Jesus Christ had produced some fairly bad outcomes. They were experiencing significant trials and persecution that had begun to produce doubt and despair. They were confused to find that their salvation had been accompanied by suffering.” – Ken Miller, Devotionary™ on 1 Peter

- **A Trinitarian Trifecta**

...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... – 1 Peter 1:2 ESV

- They had been...
 - foreknown** (determined/chosen) by God
 - sanctified** (set apart) by the Spirit
 - and **sprinkled** (purified) by the blood of Christ
 - Their salvation had been a sovereign act of God
 - Despite their current circumstances
- And Paul blessed them

May grace and peace be multiplied to you. – 1 Peter 1:2 ESV

- In the here-and-now
- But based on the hereafter

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now **for a little while**, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials... – 1 Peter 1:3-6 ESV*

- **Discussion questions**

When was the last time being a Christian left you feeling like an alien and stranger here?

Why did Peter want his readers to embrace the idea that suffering was just much a part of God's plan for them as their salvation?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What are some “momentary light afflictions” in this life and how do they prepare us for what's to come?



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SPRING SERIES 2022 – WEEK 2 HOMEWORK

WEEK 2 – 1 Peter 1:3-12: A Traveler's Guide for Christian Pilgrims

Peter's letter is eschatological in nature. In other words, it focuses on the end times – the age to come. His readers were living in Asia Minor, but he wanted them to remember that they were “temporary residents and foreigners” (1 Peter 2:11), whose real home was somewhere else. They were having a difficult time understanding all that was going on around them and happening to them. The predominant culture in which they lived was pagan and antithetical to their faith. Many of them were suffering oppression and ostracism. Because of their decision to follow Christ, they had become social pariahs, facing the rejection of both family and friends. But Peter wanted them to know that their salvation had a now, not yet aspect to it.

- Read 1 Peter 1:3-12. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Now read pages 9-16 of Ken's Devotionalary™ on 1 Peter.
- Look back at verses 3-6. What do you think Peter is referring to when he writes, “he [God] has caused us to be born again to a living hope?”

Why would that be important to these people who find themselves living as aliens and strangers in the very countries they used to consider their homes?

According to verse 6, what is it that this “living hope” is supposed to counter in their present lives?

How is that even possible?

Compare verses 6-7 of 1 Peter with James 1:2-4. What similarities do you see?

What do Peter and James give as the secret to being able to rejoice in the midst of suffering and trials?

Can you think of a time where that has been proven true in your own life? Write it down here:

- Read verses 8-9. Would you say these two verses are true in your own life? If so, why? If not, why do you think that might be the case?
- Now, read verses 10-12. Paul seems to spend a lot of time linking present trials to future salvation. What would the benefit be for us to do so?

Peter seems to believe that this future salvation, made possible through Jesus Christ, was predicted by the prophets. But from looking at verse 11, what aspect of Jesus’ salvation were their prophecies predicting?

Read Isaiah 53 and jot down all the predictions of the Messiah’s suffering you find.

Why would the suffering of Jesus be important for Christians to take into consideration?