



**Series Title:** "Exiles – the First Letter of Peter"

**Date:** January 9, 2022

**Message Title:** "Elect Exiles"

**Teaching:** Neal McKinney

**Reference:** 1 Peter 1:1-2

Here's a brief outline of the passage:

- Author
  - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ
- Audience
  - Elect exiles of the Dispersion
  - Grace and peace

### Message Summary:

To understand this letter, we must understand its author. We first met him as Simon bar Jonah, called by Jesus and renamed Peter ("Rock"). In the Gospels we meet an impulsive man who often speaks before he thinks. This letter was written around 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. Peter is imprisoned in Rome as he writes (or dictates) the letter. Within the next two to three years, Peter would be martyred for his faith in Christ.

Peter addresses his letter to the "elect exiles of the Dispersion... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Christians had been driven out of Jerusalem by the persecution of those around them. This is before Rome organized a more concerted effort to eradicate the new sect.

By identifying his audience as "elect," Peter makes a bold statement about God's omniscience—that he knows all things and he directs all things according to his design.

To be "elect" is to be chosen by the will of the one sovereign God and placed where he desires.

Exiles are identified in Scripture as aliens, strangers, sojourners, foreigners. We, too, are

exiles if we follow Christ. Like those of Peter's time. God has placed us where we are by his choice, just as he sent the first believers out from Jerusalem into the neighboring nations. Although by election we have been brought into the kingdom of God, we are temporarily put where God chooses.

As exiles, we don't belong here. Our allegiance, or citizenship is elsewhere. That has deep implications for our lives here.

To help understand what it means to be exiles where we are, look to Jeremiah 29:4-7. These verses explain v. 11, "For I know the plans I have for you..." God tells his people that:

- he has placed them where they are (in captivity in Babylon),
- they are to multiply, and prosper,
- they are to seek the welfare of the city, and
- he who sent them into exile will bring them back home one day

Perhaps the most challenging of these is that the exiles are to "seek the welfare of the city." If we are elect exiles in our time and culture, we are to follow these instructions. Do we?

When Peter speaks of the "sanctification of the Spirit," he means the continued work of God in conforming us to his Son. As he does this, we become more and more "different" from those around us; we become "set apart."

How does this begin? By our salvation, the application ("sprinkling") of the blood of Jesus to our lives.

As we live as exiles in our culture, as we seek the welfare of the "city" where we live, we are always to keep the future kingdom in our minds.

- When you were in elementary school, did your parents ever relocate your family? How did you feel?
- If you couldn't live in this country, where would you choose to live? Why?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you didn't "fit?" What was that like?
- Do you think of yourself as "elect?" What are some implications of that identification?
- Do you know someone who is an exile, a stranger, a foreigner in this land? What challenges do they face? How do you relate to them?
- What problems do you think the early exiles faced in their foreign lands? What questions do you think were on their minds as they read Peter's letter?
- Are you uncomfortable being identified as an exile? Does it make you angry? afraid? something else?
- How does verse 2 describe ways that the three Persons of the Trinity work in our lives?
- Read Jeremiah 29:4-7. How are we supposed to live as elect exiles in in a foreign land?

**More Scriptures on Election:** Acts 2:23; Deuteronomy 14:2; Isaiah 45:4; Ephesians 1:3-6; Romans 8:29-30; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 12 Peter 5:13.

## My Notes and Questions