

READ 1 PETER 1:1-2

1. When Peter uses the words “exiles” and “scattered” he is using the language of the Babylonian Captivity—a time in the life of Judah when they were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and forced to settle in a foreign land. Peter uses the exile as a model for how believers should view their place in the world today.
 - a. What are some of the things that make the world in which we live feel like a “foreign land?”
 - b. How do your friends and neighbors who do not know Christ view Christ? ...Christians? ...the church?
 - c. Read Jeremiah 29:4-7. How might God’s instructions to the Babylonian exiles apply to us today?
 - d. How might the examples of some of the Heroes of the exile, Daniel, Nehemiah or Esther, serve as examples of how we should live as exiles in a strange land?

2. In contrast to being “exiles” “scattered” throughout the world, Peter also describes believers as those “who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood...”
 - a. What is most striking to you about Peter’s description of our “identity in Christ?”
 - b. What role does each member of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) play in establishing our identity in Christ?
 - c. How does our identity in Christ put us at odds with the world?
 - d. How does our identity in Christ compel us to be meaningfully engaged with our world?
 - e. What are some initial steps you can take to more fully identify with Christ?
 - f. What are some initial steps you can take to more fully identify with those around you who do not know Christ?



How should we respond to our culture?

Our usual response is to go to one of two extremes. Either we withdraw from culture to the point that we have very little chance of having any real impact; or we are so deeply entrenched in culture that the gospel is compromised and we lose our ability to challenge our culture in any meaningful way.

Perhaps we should take our cues from Jesus. He did not withdraw from culture. In fact he was so deeply immersed in culture that he gained a reputation of being a friend of tax collectors and sinners. He was even labeled by some as a drunkard and a glutton. While the Pharisees withdrew; Jesus was fully engaged. John captures the delicate balance we find in Jesus, “He made his dwelling among us” and “He was full of grace and truth.” He lived where people lived, he loved them in a way they had never been loved, and as a result his message was hard to ignore.

Peter addresses his readers as “exiles” who are “scattered” throughout the world. Our identity in Christ automatically makes us strangers in this world. Nevertheless, Peter challenges us to live our lives on the margin as a people who are fully engaged with those around us so that they might both see and hear the beauty of the gospel.