



March 19th, 2023 • 1 Peter 2:9-12
Standing Firm in the Grace of God • The Book of 1 Peter
Message #5 • by Pastor Marcus Johnson



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Christ-centered Identity, Godly Living & Faithful Witness

1. Proclaiming God’s excellencies: as His chosen, royal & holy people

- you are a chosen race
- you are a royal priesthood
- you are a holy nation
- you are a people for his own possession
- once you were not a people, now you are God’s people
- once you had not received mercy, now you have received mercy

2. Living & witnessing faithfully: as sojourners & exiles

- abstain from the passions of the flesh
- keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable

Some Highlights of 1 Peter 2:9-12

Taken from *1 Peter* by Karen H. Jobes, pp. 158-72 (ECNT). Curly brackets { } include additional information for clarity purposes, they are not part of the author’s quotes.

{Our Christian Identity Understood in light of Israel’s Babylonian Exile}

The phrase “a chosen race” ... echoes Isa. 43:3, which announces that God himself is Israel’s only savior, who will deliver his people from their exile in Babylon. Peter frames his letter in the motif of the historic Babylonian exile in order to identify his readers with the OT promises of deliverance ... In biblical theology, Israel’s deliverance from exile in Babylon is the typological forerunner of the greater deliverance achieved by Jesus Christ, deliverance of God’s people out of darkness into light. Peter here makes the radical claim that those who believe in Jesus Christ ... though from many races, constitute a new race of those who have been born again into the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here is the foundational cure for the evils of racism in human society ... From the conception of Christians as a distinct race came the accusation that believers in Christ were “haters of mankind.” The very goals of Peter’s letter – that believers form internal bonds within the Christian community and repudiate certain attitudes and practices of their society – also gave rise to the charge that Christians were antisocial ... Christians were perceived to repudiate pleasures, (e.g., the theater, the races, the gladiatorial combats), break home and family ties, ruin business, abandon pagan religious ritual, and avoid civic duties ... This very concept of the new race caused much of the popular opposition to Christianity in the first few centuries. But as Colwell ... observes, “It was also the victory that overcame the world,” as Christians lived as members of a new race and paradoxically won over the masses.

{Living as Sojourners & Exiles (resident aliens & foreigners)}

Having explained to his readers their identity as God’s people, Peter now ... begins to instruct them on how as God’s people to live in right relationship with unbelievers in a pagan society. As our own modern society becomes more religiously diversified, Peter’s instructions ring true and clear for believers today, who must first understand who they are in Christ as they attempt to live rightly in an increasingly un-Christian world ... Regardless of where Peter’s readers find themselves scattered, they are to live as faithful witnesses to the truth of Christ’s gospel in a way that does not unnecessarily offend the expectations of their society. Peter conceptualizes the relationship of Christians to society as that of visiting strangers or resident aliens, those who appreciate, respect, and value their host land but nevertheless maintain their own distinct identity within it ... Peter’s readers need to reorient their self-understanding with respect to the society in which they live. The terms Peter uses to describe them basically mean that as Christians they are citizens first of God’s holy nation and therefore not primarily citizens (i.e., aliens and foreigners) of the society in which they live, to whatever extent the two conflict. With the allusion to Abraham {2:11; cf. Gen 23:4}, he reminds his readers that they stand in a long tradition of people who were chosen by God and called to be aliens and strangers in the places where they lived. Estrangement from, and rejection by, their society are therefore no indication of alienation from God or a weakness of Christian faith. To the contrary, the story of redemption tells of God forming his chosen people by calling Abraham to become a resident alien and foreigner in a strange land ... Because all Christians are citizens of God’s holy nation, they are to understand themselves as resident aliens and foreigners {sojourners & exiles ESV} wherever they may be residing ... Peter expects that his readers can live in a way that will be recognized as good even by the standards of unbelieving pagans ... Peter recognizes that non-Christian values of his culture overlap in some ways with those of the Christian faith ... One trait of human nature seems to be that people watch strangers more closely ... He does not advise a withdrawal from, or rebellion against, the roles of society but rather that Christians conduct themselves properly within those relationships ... Peter hopes that unbelievers who have observed the good works of the Christians they have slandered will have come to faith in Christ.