

CHOSEN PILGRIMS

1 Peter 1:1

INTRODUCTION

- In the ungodly world today, two of the highest virtues are “tolerance” and “diversity”
- Governments, business and organisations promote their moral purity by being “inclusive”
- But this so-called diversity does not extend to conservatives, and especially Christians
- This world is under the dominion of the prince of darkness, and exalts sin and unrighteousness
- Those who belong to Jesus Christ are therefore enemies of this world and become the targets of its hatred
- “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” (1 John 3:13)
- The professing Christian who enjoys this wicked world’s favour and applause is most likely unconverted (Luke 6:26)
- As we saw last week, Peter wrote this letter to suffering Christians, to encourage and exhort them in the midst of their trials
- Here in the opening verses, he establishes their identity as God’s chosen people
- In this post-modern world, a person’s “identity” is what they choose it to be, regardless of reality
- We do not identify ourselves according to our own sinful wishes, but according to God’s revelation
- It is our identity in Christ that Peter opens his epistle with
- The New Testament uses different images are used to represent the Christian life
 - ✓ Athletes running a race (1 Corinthians 9:24; Hebrews 12:1)
 - ✓ Soldiers fighting a warfare (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12)
 - ✓ Pilgrims travelling on a journey (1 Peter 2:11)
- Today we will focus on the words “strangers scattered” in v.1
- The word for “strangers” (*parepidēmois*) means “foreigners, resident aliens, sojourners”, and is translated as “pilgrims” in Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11
- This description of the Christian gives a vivid picture of our relationship to this present evil world

- ✓ As *in* the but not *of* the world (John 17:14-16)
- ✓ As having no continuing city here, but seeking one to come (Hebrews 13:14)
- ✓ As being distinct and different to the ways of the world (Romans 12:2)

I. THE ELECTING CALL OF THE PILGRIM

A. God has chosen a people for himself

1. The word “elect” (*eklektois*) in the Greek is placed before “strangers” in v.1
2. It means “chosen, selected” as a recipient of a special privilege
3. From the beginning, God has chosen and called out by his grace a people unto himself
 - a. Noah and his family were chosen out of all the inhabitants of the earth (Genesis 6:8)
 - b. Abram was called out an idolatrous family to be the father of God’s chosen people (Genesis 12:1-3; Joshua 24:2)
 - c. The nation of Israel was chosen by God “to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6)
 - d. And still today, God is taking out of the Gentiles, “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14; 1 Peter 2:9-10)
4. The Christian is rejected by this world, but chosen by God
5. Likewise, the unbelievers are rejected by God, but chosen by the world and its god (John 15:19)

B. God scatters his people among the heathen

1. God chooses his people by his grace, and he scatters them by his grace
2. He calls them to go as missionaries carrying the gospel (Acts 16:9-10)
3. He uses circumstances such as persecution to move them into other places (Acts 8:1)
4. As “the salt of the earth”, God scatters his people around the world, that the lost might know the seasoning message of the gospel (Matthew 5:13)

II. THE EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER OF THE PILGRIM

A. No person begins their existence as a pilgrim

1. All of us are naturally born as natives of this present evil world, walking according to its sinful course (Ephesians 2:1-3)

2. It is only when the gospel enters in to the heart, and God effects salvation in the life, regenerating and transforming us into his children, that we begin our pilgrimage (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- B. The Christian has become a citizen of a heavenly kingdom
1. Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20)
 2. We serve a different King to the world
 3. We live according to different laws to the world
- C. The Christian regards this world as a foreign, temporary dwelling-place
1. This earthly life is called "the time of your sojourning" (1 Peter 1:17)
 2. Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles", "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10)
 3. We are not to put our roots too deep in this world, lest our hearts be drawn from the spiritual and eternal to the carnal and temporal
 4. The "cares and riches and pleasures of this life" are like thorns and weeds that choke the word of God in our lives (Luke 8:14)
 5. The affairs of this life "entangle" us and hinder our pursuit of spiritual things (2 Timothy 2:4)
 6. The pilgrim's life is guided by a heart and mind that is fixed upon his heavenly home (Hebrews 11:13-16; Psalm 84:5)
 7. Our rest is not in this world – "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9)
 8. As we journey, we are to sing the songs of Zion to keep our hearts fixed on our destination (Psalm 119:54)
- D. The world ought to regard us as strangers and foreigners to their customs and ways
1. Often this will provoke them to ridicule, slander and persecution (1 Peter 4:4)
 2. They "speak evil of those things which they know not" (Jude 10)
 3. The consistent testimony of history shows that God's pilgrims have ever been hated by this world and mercilessly hunted down and slaughtered like lambs (Hebrews 11:35-38)

III. THE EVANGELIC CHARGE OF THE PILGRIM

- A. The pilgrim must have a right attitude to the world

1. We are to hate the world system, but love the world's people
 2. We should never stand aloof from the lost, or regard ourselves as superior to them – it is only by God's grace we are anything
 3. "There but for the grace of God, go I"
 4. As Israel were to remember they were once slaves, so we must remember that we were once under sin and Satan's bondage, and Christ redeemed us in his mercy (Deuteronomy 15:15)
- B. The pilgrim has a duty to the world
1. God has chosen us for a purpose – "that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9)
 2. We are called not to show forth our own goodness, but the glories of our Saviour, causing the world to look from us to him (Matthew 5:16; cf. Galatians 1:24)
 3. As citizens of the heavenly kingdom, we are sent into this world as ambassadors for Christ, representing him, and delivering his message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20)
 4. As former worldlings that were shown the way of salvation by Christ's pilgrims, we have a duty to do likewise and seek to rescue others from the broad way of destruction, into the narrow way of life (Matthew 10:8)
 5. The love of Christ to us constrains us to lovingly win others to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14)

CONCLUSION

1. This world is constantly working to conform us to its ways (Romans 12:2)
2. There are many who are as Lot, who first pitched his tent towards Sodom, but finally sat at its gate and called the Sodomites his brethren
3. Such will lose their consecration, their testimony, and all those temporal things they lusted after
4. We are not to be conformed to the world, but conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29)
5. Christ, our example is the supreme Pilgrim, who was despised and rejected by a world that should have worshipped him as Maker and Lord (Isaiah 53:3; John 1:10)
6. Christ prayed in John 17 for our preservation from evil in this world, and showed God will sanctify (set apart) his people through his word of truth (John 17:14-17)