

# 1 Peter 1:13-21 “Battlefront, part 1” // I Am an Alien #2

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I wasn't here last week: took my oldest daughter to the DR with our kids' ministry on our first Summit family mission trip. I had a great time... the whole vision behind this kind of trip is that a) that families really ought to do ministry together and b) we want to see our kids develop a vision for mission from a young age. I really believed that happened. US Fireball. I'm trying to steer her in the direction of missions, not marketing.

I understand Raudel, our Spanish pastor, killed it. He pointed out to me the poor timing of...

But that is the title for our series. It's a series through 1 Peter, and for the next several weeks we're just going to read the book of 1 Peter together and diving into some of the incredible, life-changing insights that Peter gives us about God. If you've never developed a daily Bible reading habit, this is a great time to start: (I had forgotten how good 1 Peter was... read through it several times in the last few weeks and I've got some great stuff.)

The title “I am an Alien,” comes from a word (and a concept) that Peter uses over and over throughout the book.

- He addresses the book, in the very first verse, “*to the elect exiles (aliens) scattered all over Asia.*” And, throughout the book he'll say things like, “*I urge you as sojourners and exiles...*” (2:11). Your citizenship is not here; you're an exile, an alien. As you'll see, getting that identity right is going to be key to interpreting life correctly.

**When you're not from a country, you can be one of several things:**

- **Immigrant:** you're not from here, but you've made this place your new permanent home. This is what a lot of

Christians do with the world. They live as citizens of this world and treat this world as if it is their permanent home. They are really concerned with how things are turning out down *here*; they leverage most of their resources to make a comfortable life *here*; they worry about their reputation *here*; they're worried about what they're going to miss out on *here*: (am I ever going to be married; you've only got one shot at life; what you miss this time around you miss forever)

- **Another option is you can be a tourist:** A tourist is someone who never really gets involved; you just pass through; speak your language; stay in your group; eat your food; stay in Western hotels; look for Starbucks. That's the attitude a lot of Christians have toward this world: stay separated; never get involved. You're like, “I'm just passing through; me and Kirk Cameron are waiting to get raptured off of this trailer park of a planet.” *That's actually wrong, too.*
- **There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> attitude you can have, which is what Peter talks about here: Exile:** You're not trying to become an immigrant (you realize you're a citizen of heaven); but you also realize that for a time you are stationed here and you need to plant part of your life here (you don't live as a tourist).
  - **When Israel was exiles in Babylon this is what God said to them: Jeremiah 29:4-7** “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: [5] Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce... (vs. 6 he says, “get married and have kids”) [7] Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
  - That's what Peter is referring to.

- Peter uses another image in chapter 2, that of ambassadors.<sup>1</sup> An ambassador is someone who is sent into one country with a mission from another country. You are there in the new country for the purposes of that country but your citizenship and your mission are from your home country.

So, you're not an immigrant; you're not a tourist; *you are* an exile and an ambassador. And because you are an exile, you don't really belong here. ***And so in many ways, you should expect to be in a hostile environment. So we pick up in vs. 13:***

**[13] Therefore, preparing your minds for action,**

- The Greek here is great: literally: gird up the loins of your mind for action. Most of you have never girded up your loins.
- They wore robes and to run or do battle they'd tuck them into their belt. Roll up your sleeves; you're about to get dirty, to do battle.

**and being sober-minded,**

- Sober-minded: You're not naively unaware of the environment you're in. You're in a hostile environment; engaged in a cosmic battle.
- In chapter 5 (5:8) he says that you have an adversary, Satan, who prowls around like a roaring lion to devour you. If you knew that, you'd be alert. Ever see the movie *the Ghost and the Darkness? Me in Africa.*
- The other option is to live in a fairy-tale world where you are unaware you're in a battle... then tragedy and attack sneak up on you and you are unprepared
- We are in a battle for the souls of people and the name of God in the world, and a lot of you need to wake up! You need to have an active, wide-eyed sober faith in God's promises! Otherwise you're going to get overwhelmed; or

you're going to drift into the temptations that arise from boredom.

- Summit Church, some of us need to wake up! We have an enemy always on the prowl and the souls of men and women are at stake

**set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

**[14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,**

Here we go:

**[15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."**

OK. So that's a pretty big command there, isn't it?

First, let's talk about what holiness is; then what our response should be; and then, finally, how we obey this command.

**1<sup>st</sup>: What holiness is:**

Key word to remember with "holiness" is "separated." Two words in Hebrew translated "holy": "*kadosh*," and Greek: "*hagios*." Both mean separated, or "cut away from."

- When God told the Israelites that He was "holy" He meant that He was different from them; separated from them. Unique; one of a kind.
  - **Exodus 15:11, "There is none holy like the Lord."** (BTW, if your name is Michael, that's your name in Hebrew right there: Michael: Mik-a-el: "none holy like the Lord.")
- Different; separated
- You study the OT you'll see that that is when Israel got in trouble. They forgot the absolute otherness of God. They started to think about God casually, like a slightly higher version of them.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 2:9; cf 2 Cor 5:20

- But God is not that. He's not just a slightly smarter version of us. He's totally different.
  - You see this in **Job**: when you create your own universe, let's have a conversation.
  - **Isa 55:8-9**, "My thoughts are not your thoughts; my ways are not your ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."
    - Don't flatter yourself that you could understand it all just by me explaining it to you. We are not peers.
  - Or Paul in **Romans 9:20** asks the hardest apologetic question ever asked, "If God knew that people were going to rebel against God, why did He make them in the first place?" Paul's answer: "Who are you to reply against God!"
  - The point is not that there is an answer; his point is that there is a time when the mouth must stop and the knee should bow.
- **I am not talking about checking your brain at the door and believing things naively**; I'm saying that if this is God speaking, then realize you are talking to the uncreated (everything else had a beginning; everything in the universe can point back to something that caused it, except God. Nothing caused God.) He is the alpha and omega; the great I AM; the transcendent; that means you give him a certain deference.
- **Holiness also meant "separated" from all that was impure.** The Jewish people had all these regulations to keep them from entering the presence of God with any defilement, because God was absolute purity. Totally perfect, no defilement.
  - Holiness is not an attractive concept to most Americans. You think of it as something that is sterile, boring. Bright, white, colorless light. But holiness is the perfection of all that is good. Think of it as "wholeness," which is where we get the English

word. Wholly perfect goodness; perfect justice; perfect love!

- We're all attracted to that, aren't we? Perfect justice. Perfect beauty. Perfect love. Who wants a government that is partially corrupt, or a little unjust? No girl wants to marry a guy that is unjust, lazy, self-centered or dishonest.
- God is these things; so things like injustice; impurity; are repulsive to him.
  - Habakkuk 1:13 says he is of such pure eyes that He cannot behold evil. Doesn't mean we are invisible; it means He can't behold it with neutral emotion. Think about watching something heinous: torture; unjust; *the Help*.
  - God can't react neutrally: **Uzzah**: Ark of the Covenant. Don't touch God's holiness. His sin was supposing that his hand was cleaner than the dirt. The dirt has never rebelled against God; the dirt is cleaner than our filthy sinful hands.
- **And that leads me to the most magnificent thing about God's holiness, which is when Jesus, God's holy Son came to earth, His holiness did not destroy us, but healed us.**
  - Jesus, who was holy, touched unholy things, unclean things, and they were cleansed. **Matthew 8:1** *When Jesus came down from the mountain... a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean..." [3] And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*
- When clean things touch unclean things, the clean things become unclean. (My wife has a cold; I'm lying in bed listening to her cough; there's no chance my wellness is going to make her better, but there's a real chance her sickness will make me sick. But with Jesus, it worked in reverse. His holiness was not defiled by us; His holiness healed our unholiness.

- **That's because Jesus was not only holy in His purity, but in His love and power.**
  - **His holy love absorbed our unholiness and suffered our death for it and His holy power conquered it by rising from the dead.**
- **The greatest display of God's holiness was not in His separating Himself from us, but in His entering into our sin and corruption and taking it upon Himself and putting it away forever.**

Peter says that the holiness of God calls for a response from us:

**[15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,**

The life you live should be reflective of the God you love. Let's talk about a few ways that is true:

- **In our devotion to Him:** our commitment to God should be on a completely different level than our commitment to everything else.
  - Sometimes we talk about God as if He wanted to be merely the top of our list of priorities. Our devotion to God should be of a whole different kind.
  - Imagine I said to my wife: of all the girls in my life, baby, you're #1. What does that mean? I have a list of girls I'm romantically involved with and she's my fav? I'm a little in love with, and attracted to, and partially committed to, a few other girls... but none as much as you, baby. You're #1. No, she gets her own list of which she is the sole member. She's not #1; she's the only 1.
  - You think, "God is at the top of my list." What list? God gets His own list. Nothing else in your life created the universe you live in and died for your sins.
  - Jesus is not your co-pilot. He created and owns the plane. And the air it flies in the law of gravity it defies. He's not your BFF. He's not your homeboy. He is holy. The homeboy is holy.

- **In our adoration of Him:** How we adore God should be on a whole different plane.
  - I hear people compare worship to how you act at a football game, and I appreciate the sentiment... But our worship of God should be on a whole different plane.
  - Let me be your pastor. I sometimes get disturbed watching different ones of you worship.
  - Do they not know what the Scripture says?
    - Clap your hands all you people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph (Psalm 47:1)
    - Ps. 35:27, "May those who delight in salvation shout for joy."
    - 1 Tim 2:8, "I command men everywhere to lift up holy hands."
  - These are commands. Let's go back to English class. What kind of sentence? IMPERATIVE
  - I've read every command on worship: none of them are stand in a subdued manner with a coffee cup in your hands and a bored look on your face
    - "Not my personality." I don't see anything in there about personality. Clap your hands a few of you people?
      - Second, of all, bologna: I watch you men get energized and enthusiastic about other things.
    - "But I don't feel like it.." Yes, but He's worthy of it! You don't worship based on what you feel like but on what He's worthy of.
    - And let me give you a little secret: our hearts sometimes follow our posture.

So, we are to be holy because God is holy. But how? Let's read the next several verses, because in these verses is the secret, if you will, to living holy: **[17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as**

silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. [20] He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.

The command is how to be holy and the question is how. Here's the question we should ask: Question: What, or who, is holy in those verses?

- Who is without blemish or spot? Jesus.
- His blood was spilled to ransom us: If my unholiness looked upon God I would die; Jesus took my unholiness upon Himself, looked into the face of God and died in my place.
- The gospel is "**Jesus in my place.**" God's holiness given to us as a gift.

Peter says that gift of His blood is *precious* to us. Why does he use that word? Precious is what you say about something that cannot be replaced.

- Notice, Peter says, vs. 18, that there was nothing handed down from our fathers that could save us! Our greatest accomplishments are usually things we hand down to our children, and that each generation builds on:
  - **Money:** some people work hard and leave so much money that the next generation doesn't have any worries. But money doesn't produce morality or even responsibility. Can you say, Paris Hilton? A lot of times with the increase of money and power come the increase of greed and exploitation. Money is awesome. But it's not a Savior.
  - **Science:** Every generation passes down unbelievable accomplishments to the next. What was science fiction in one generation is day to day reality in the next. But technology hasn't taken away our problems. Our grandparents left us the motorized car but also the atom bomb; our generation will leave the next the Iphone, but also internet porn. Science doesn't produce morality. Science doesn't deal with soul issues; suicide

rates are higher and the happiness index is lower in more scientifically sophisticated countries than in more rural ones.

- **Eugenics:** Ever since Alduous Huxley's *Brave New World* we've been thinking about genetically designing the perfect human. But perfect genes don't create sinlessness. In fact, all attempts at eugenics usually end up with great atrocities.
- **Religious traditions can't save:** religious traditions handed down from our parents often leads to self-righteousness, and xenophobia, and a sense of superiority, and persecution
- **Government** traditions, on the right or left, haven't been able to save:
  - Communism promised itself as the great Savior. How many millions did Stalin and Mao Tse Tung slaughter on the way to their perfect government? And has Communism produced any nation we'd want to live in?
  - Capitalism: We all realize now that capitalism can be abused and exploited. (I'm not trying to say all government systems are equally good or bad: a housing bubble burst on Wall Street does not equal 20 million Chinese slaughtered in the name of Communism. But the point is capitalism can't save us either. It's not sufficient as a Savior.
    - No government tradition can.
    - I love what Winston Churchill said about capitalism: capitalism is the least bad of all the bad options.

These are the great accomplishments handed down from our fathers. None of them can save. Our problem was, and is, a problem *vis-a-vis* God, and only God can provide the solution to that problem.

Only one thing could save: the perfect death of the eternal Son of God. Jesus said to the Father before He died, "If there is any other way..." but there was no other way! His blood is precious!

- **Illustration:** Read a story about two guys hiking in the Himalayas and got caught in a snowstorm, lost... match

Peter tells us to live with an awareness of the preciousness and value of what Christ has done for us. That will give you the motive for holiness.

- Motive comes from the word "motor." The drive.
- Give you a great example:

## 2 Samuel 23:16-17

- Story from the life of David. The Philistines, Israel's enemies, have taken over Bethlehem stationed a bunch of soldiers there. David is on the run. He's an exile.
- After a long day of travelling he murmurs, 'Oh, that I could have a drink from the well by the gate...' Where he was they had water, but he was nostalgic for water from his hometown.
- Now, he wasn't giving a command, but his men heard his murmur and so they decided to go get it for him. Now, remember, this is where the Philistine army is stationed, and the well is by the gate, which means, it's out in plain view. So, they fight their way into the city, get the water, and then they fight their way back out! That's a total Jack Bauer maneuver! Then, they traipse back through the desert carrying the water, but not drinking it. They present it to David, who refuses to drink but instead pours it out on the ground – which would have ticked me off a little. But David says (2 Sam 23:16-17): *"Far be it from me oh, Lord to drink the blood of these men!"* These men were honored.
- What you see there is that there was such a tight sense of devotion. Shows you two things:
  - What total devotion looks like: they were wholly devoted to David. Get this: this was produced by a sigh, not even a command.

- Second, where that kind of devotion comes from: David's men felt that way about him because they knew that's how he felt about them!
- You hear that story and you ought to think about Jesus. Jesus not only risked His life to get us what we needed; He sacrificed it! And He didn't just honor us by pouring out a cup of water on the ground, He poured His lifeblood itself, His precious lifeblood, out on the ground, for us!
- He was "wholly devoted" to us; our hearts should rise up to be "wholly" committed to Him. If this is how wholly committed David's men were with him, how much *more* should we be 'wholly' with Jesus!
- When somebody makes a statement about "How much do I have to give?" I always know that they don't really get it yet.
- **"How much do I have to give?"** is not the question that comes from love. **"How much do I get to give?"** is the question of love.
- **We ought to hear the sigh of His heart...** Oh God, you love the lost? Let me go after them. God, you love the poor? Here's my money...

Show you one other angle on this (Peter is very gospel-centered):

- [17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds,
  - This verse, at first, confused me. Then I really thought about it: Judges impartially... (is that good or bad news? But we call God "Father," a term of intimacy and endearment.
  - That phrase is the gospel! God judges impartially—which means we're all in trouble; but Jesus was judged, impartially, in our place; He paid the full measure of penalty for our sin.
  - So now, I can approach God, who is perfectly holy, without fear because Jesus was judged in my place.
  - So...
- conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,
  - This is not fear of judgment, because Jesus was judged in our place and we have nothing left to fear.

- It is fear that is more like a reverential fear (awe):
  - Illustration: Boy with father: Afraid to hurt him. I am precious to Him, and He is precious to me.
  - Peter uses in these verses, a couple of time (vss.14, 17) the child, father analogy a lot. That's where we're supposed to learn this kind of reverential fear:
    - If you have good parents (I know some of you didn't) you learn to obey God through them. For a while you obey them because you fear what they can do in punishment. But over time you start to obey because you love them, and you love them because you see how much they love you!
    - An aside to you parents: Why so important to learn to discipline kids! Won't let my kids backtalk; disrespect, or disobey. They are learning to relate to God through me; when they backtalk and disrespect me they are back-talking God, who stands behind me. But I want them to see the tenderness and love and self-sacrificing way I live for them so they see not someone who controls them but someone who cares enough about them to pour out their lives for them, and they learn to think of God that way too.

Last verses... vs. 21, Through Jesus we... [21] who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope **are in God.**

*Through him are believers in God:* This past week I was really arrested by those last two words, "in God." The whole point of all this was to give us a first-hand, direct relationship with, love and trust in God:

- For many Christians, it is almost like God is incidental to their Christianity. Christianity is more of a lifestyle and set

of morals than a walk with God and a depth of passion for Him. When you talk to them there is no direct love or passion for God; they can't talk to you about things they are learning firsthand from God.

- Peter says that God did salvation this way so that we would know *Him* directly; adore Him; have faith *in Him*; be amazed at His love for us and be in love with Him.
  - Can I tell you my biggest problem with Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons? They teach that Jesus was not God, and here's the problem with that: They're telling me that God appointed someone else to die for my sins. God was involved in the planning, but ultimately someone else suffered and died for me. So guess happens in my heart then? Who do I really love? Who am I really committed to?
  - Whoever saved me! I might say, *"Thanks, God, for setting all that up, but my heart really passionately goes after that guy."*
  - God would not relinquish the role of Savior to anybody else, because He wants our faith and hope and love to be in Him.
  - That's why He says, **Isa 43:11, "I, I am the LORD, and besides Me there is no Savior."**
  - Our faith and our hope and our love are in Him.

## Conclusion

*Have you seen or felt the value of Christ's blood given for you? Is it moving you to be wholly devoted to Him?*

Has the preciousness of what He did for you overcome you, so that your hope and love and devotion are in God, and just the sighs and murmurings that emanate from His heart become your great passion?

Go to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ and look at the ocean of love that's there; and stand on the shores of that ocean and listen to the waves lapping on the shore until the sounds of those waves sink deep

into your heart. I'm not talking about theology; I'm talking about worship.

God, I was precious to you; you are precious to me. What is important to you becomes important to me. Your wish becomes my command.

- **(Moravian missionaries): Holy love**

# Bullpen:

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((Let me make sure you get this:

- **Holiness is given to us as a gift, purchased by Christ.**
- **Holiness is not a standard to be reached; it's a reality now to be lived out.**
  - Jesus was holy in your place; He has given you that holiness as a gift; and now you live in response.
  - Think of it like this: It's not, "If you bark, God will consider you to be a dog." It's, "Because you are a dog, bark!" It's not, "If you act holy, God will consider you holy." It's, "God has made you holy. Therefore be holy.
- **Holiness simply means being "wholly devoted" to God. If you need a motive to do that, think about how He was wholly devoted to you.**
  - The position of holiness Christ has given us becomes the power for holiness at work inside of us. As we see the preciousness of Christ's blood poured out for us, we develop this desire to pour out our lives for Him.
  - So go to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ and look at the ocean of love that's there; and stand on the shores of that ocean and listen to the waves lapping on the shore until the sounds of those waves sink deep into your heart. I'm not talking about theology; I'm talking about worship.
- **Holiness does not mean being separated from the world.** Jesus' holiness was shown not in his separation from us, but in leaving His world and entering into our pain to rescue us.
  - Christians have this image of being holy like we're sanitized and don't want to touch the dirty world. Like one of those hospital shows where they wash and don't touch anything. Real holiness means loving people so much that you enter their pain and corruption and take it upon yourself, like Jesus did for us. Those who are the holiest are dirtiest with the pain and suffering of the world.
  - Jesus was the friend of sinners who took our pain and our sorrow and made them His very own.))

Question: What, or who, is holy in those verses?

- Jesus: He's called a lamb without blemish or spot.
- His blood was spilled to ransom us: If my unholiness looked upon God I would die; Jesus took my unholiness upon Himself, looked into the face of God and died in my place.
- The gospel is "**Jesus in my place.**" His holiness given to me as a gift.
  - The greatest thing about Jesus' holiness was its healing power. Jesus touched unholy things, unclean things, and they were healed. **Matthew 8:1** *When Jesus came down from the mountain... a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean..." [3] And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*
- When clean things touch unclean things, the clean things become unclean. (My wife has a cold; I'm lying in bed listening to her cough; there's no chance my wellness is going to make her better, but there's a real chance her sickness will make me sick. But with Jesus, it worked in reverse. His holiness was not defiled by us; His holiness healed our unholiness.
- That's because Jesus was not only holy in His purity, but in His love and power. **His holy love absorbed our unholiness and suffered our death for it and His holy power conquered it by rising from the dead.**
- **The greatest display of God's holiness was not in His separating Himself from us, but in His entering into our sin and corruption and taking it upon Himself and putting it away forever.**

Peter says that gift of His blood is *precious* to us. Why does he use that word? Precious is what you say about something that cannot be replaced.

- And that was the greatest thing about Jesus' holiness: it had the power to heal.
- Christ's blood makes you positionally holy; dwelling on that gives you the power to actually live holy. The position of holiness that Christ purchased for you becomes the power for you to actually live a holy way.
- Greatest thing about God's holiness: God's holiness was most clearly displayed when Jesus came to the cross for us. Holiness means "separation from defilement," but because God was also wholly perfect in love, Jesus came to rescue us.
- The ultimate display of His holiness was not in His separation from us, but in His coming close in to us. He bore our sins and our sorrows, and made them His very own.
  - **Matthew 8:1** When Jesus came down from the mountain... a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." [3] And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.
  - **Luke 8:44**, the woman who was unclean was cleansed.

Some of you have this idea of holiness of being separated from the world; like it means you are sanitized. Those who are most holy are dirtiest with the pain and suffering of the world. Holiness means being like Jesus, and Jesus was the friend of sinners who took upon Himself their shame and defilement and entered into their weakness.

Christ's blood makes you positionally holy; dwelling on that gives you the power to actually live holy. The position of holiness that Christ purchased for you becomes the power for you to actually live a holy way. When you see the preciousness of Christ's blood for you (how valuable He was), that enables you to live in a holy way.

The value of our future inheritance induces us to live in present holiness.

The only thing worth giving up the world for is the precious blood of Christ and the glorious future inheritance