

## God's Building 12: Living as Resident Aliens

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### 1 Peter 2.9-12

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

<sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

### 1 Peter 2.9-12

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

<sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

### Introduction

There's a tension in the text that all Christians feel every day:

- "How do we live in a hostile world when we belong to a holy God?"
- The key this passage gives us is to live as 'resident aliens'.

### 1 Peter 2.9-12

1. We are a community of 'resident aliens' (2.9a; 11)
2. defined by God's grace (2.9-10),
3. declaring God's glory (2.9b),
4. displaying God's goodness (2.11-12).

### community of 'resident aliens'

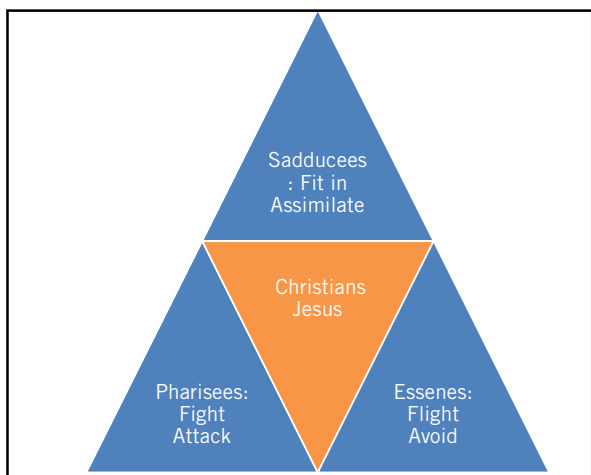
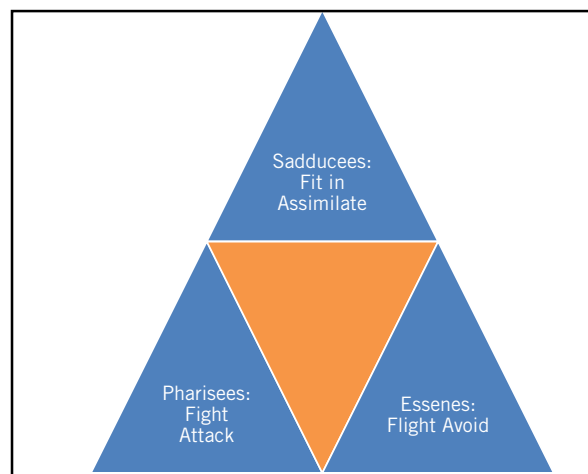
Note the unresolved tension in the text:

- We live 'among the Gentiles' and 'do good', even though we are slandered 'as evildoers'.
- We live in the world, yet because we belong to God we abstain from it.
- We are in the world but not of the world.

## community of 'resident aliens

So how do we deal with this tension resulting from being in the world but not of the world?

- Sociologists tell us that most organizations or movements relate to the culture in one of three ways...



## community of 'resident aliens

We're in the world but not of it (2.11).

- 'sojourners' (Παροίκους) = "resident aliens, those who live in a place that is not their home."
- 'exiles' (Παρεπιδήμιους) = those staying for a while in a strange or foreign place, *sojourning, residing temporarily*.

## community of 'resident aliens

- Note the community aspect of each description (2.9a) – not alone!
- Israel (Ex 19:5-6) in the desert.
- 'diaspora' paradigm (1 Pet 1.1): "But 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." (Jer 29:7)

## defined by God's grace

- 'chosen', not 'choice' (Deut 7.6-8)
- We are a 'priesthood', we don't have a priesthood: called 'atheists'.
- A 'holy' nation, despite 1 Pet 2.11!
- God's 'treasured possession', despite being like Gomer (2.10// Hosea 2.23; 1.2-3; 3.1-2).
- We're God's 'treasured possession', though all is His (Deut 10.14-15)!

## declaring God's glory

... that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

- How can we not praise when we are so loved/favoured?
- We praise what we enjoy: 'marvellous'
- We were made for this (Isa 43.20-21)
- God's grace produces God's greatest glory (and our greatest good).

## displaying God's goodness

- If we're defined by God's grace we'll put His goodness on display.
- Despite God's grace there's still a battle for our souls.
- Internally we 'abstain'; externally we engage.
- 'Unless we have within us that which is above us we will soon yield to that which is around us.'

## displaying God's goodness

- Allusion to Jesus' words (Matt 5.16)
- Our 'way of life' (1 Pet 1.15, 18; 2.12; 3.1-2).
- Imago Dei: there's some good left in culture: overlap with our values.
- The world will reject and regard us.
- See Naaman (2 Kings 5.1, 14-19)
- Explain 'day of visitation.' (2.12)

## Conclusion

- We are a community of resident aliens, defined by God's grace, declaring God's glory, and displaying God's goodness.
- Because we are resident aliens, we can be both faithful to a holy God and fruitful to this hostile world!