

Discussion on 1 Peter 2:11-12

Sunday School – August 13, 20, 27 and September 3, 2017
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

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1. TEXT (1 Peter 2:11-12):¹

Dear friends, I'm begging you – because you're foreigners and temporary residents here, always keep far away from the worldly lusts which are battling against your souls.

Always keep your whole way of life pure among the gentiles, so that as they speak evil about you as though you're criminals, because of your good deeds (which they're watching) they might give honor to God on that day when He returns to judge the world.

2. THINKING THROUGH THE TEXT:

- a. **Dear friends, I'm begging you – because you're foreigners and temporary residents here, always keep far away from the worldly lusts which are battling against your souls.**

¹ This is my own original translation from the UBS-5 Greek text.

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Q1: What foundation has Peter just laid for us, which makes this command make better sense? What identity has he given us as “Christians,” in 2:4-10?

- **Re-read vv.4-5, 9-10** (chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, a collection of living stones which make up God’s spiritual temple, called to be God’s people, given mercy)

Q2: What are “worldly lusts?”

- This is a generic description of sinful, immoral and unholy lusts that God’s people shouldn’t have anything to do with
- I *could* make a list, but there’s really little point – these kinds of lists are all over the New Testament:
 - o **Read 1 Peter 4:14-17**
 - o **Read Romans 1:28-32**
 - o **Read Titus 3:1-8**
- We must **always** keep far away from worldly lusts – **how do we do it?**
 - o **“Defense in depth” analogy**, to protect you from yourself
 - o Fervent and continual prayer for change in heart and desire

Q3: In what way are worldly lusts “doing battle against your souls?”

- This question **is not** about the impact of sin on your “inner person;” **it is** about the internal warfare that is *always raging* inside each of us
 - o **(1)** We know what we ought to do, and how we ought to act, because we have God’s inspired word, and the Holy Spirit to guide us to interpret it – any Christian knows this in an intellectual, theoretical, conceptual way
 - o **(2)** Peter tells us we must *always* keep far away from worldly lusts
 - o **(3)** Yet, these lusts are still out there, waiting, lurking, tempting and enticing us – **Q4: what has your salvation done to *the power* these sins have over you? When you consider these sins for you (whatever they are), what is the difference between before and after your salvation?**

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- You were a slave to sin, but now you're a slave to Christ
- **Read Romans 6**
- The power sin had over you is broken, the shackles have been removed and the prison door has opened – if you go back into that cell, it's because you choose to, not because you were forced to
 - (4) What we have, therefore, is a constant internal battle and struggle between these worldly lusts and your souls (cf. Romans 7)
- **Q5: Why do you believe Peter is so concerned with Christians keeping far away from these worldly lusts? If we lose too many of these battles on a daily basis, if we stop struggling for self-control, what will the result be for our individual and collective mission?**
 - (1) We'll fail
 - (2) We won't be holy priests; we'll be a laughingstock
 - (3) We won't be able to show and represent our holy God to the unbelievers, because we'll be *just like* the unbelievers
 - (4) If we fail, we'll be just like pagan Israel (Ps 78:52-64)
 - But, we have more than they did:
 - Old Covenant vs. New Covenant
 - Pencil sketch vs. color photograph
 - **Read 1 Peter 1:10-12**

Q6: This is the third time Peter has referred to Christians as “exiles” or “foreigners” in this world (cf. 1:1; 1:17). Why does he say this, and what is his point?

- We don't belong here; we're just staying here for awhile
- The habits, thoughts, priorities, worldviews and outlooks on life that a Christian has are *very, very different* from those an unbeliever has
 - (1) different god (Satan vs. God)
 - (2) different heart (stone vs. flesh)
 - (3) different soul (dead vs. alive)
 - (4) energized and influenced by a different spirit (Satan [cf. Eph 2] vs. holy Spirit),
 - (5) different spiritual status (criminal vs. adopted child in God's family)

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- Peter is telling us to not assimilate and conform to the world; we need to retain our distinctive Christian identity while we live in this present, evil world
 - o EX: *Analogy of military service overseas*
 - Americans seek to retain the distinctive and important characteristics of our culture on overseas military bases (as much as is practical), because our “identity” is important to our sense of community in a strange place
 - (e.g. clothes, shopping, recreational comforts on base, reposo, personal greetings, etc.)
 - No matter how well you manage to understand the culture and “get along” there, you’re always conscious that you have a US passport, and this place is not your “home”
- Peter has just told us that we’re a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people – *how can we announce to the world the wonderful things God has done, if we don’t care enough about God to reflect His holiness in the way we live our lives?*
 - o *So, the point is – you can’t assimilate!*
 - o You have to keep your identity as a Christian, while learning how make it in this world, especially at work Monday – Friday
 - o Your mission as a priest for God depends on your ability to represent Him to the world, and *that* hinges on representation you put forward by how you live your life
 - o You’re an ambassador, and you may be the only ambassador for Christ some people ever see – *and God put you where you are to play that role*
 - *How well are you doing?*
- If we start thinking about our roles as individual and collective priests for God, then your life, your job, and the habits, characteristics and personality that makes you “you” starts to take on significant meaning –
 - o (1) God made you the way you are, and put you where you are in your station and lot in life
 - o (2) your life has meaning and purpose,
 - o (3) because I can’t be the ambassador you are, where you are to the people you’re around (and *vice versa*)
 - o (4) because God has posted us to *different locations!*

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Q7: Why is Peter “begging” them, or “strongly urging” them to do this?

- This shows how important this principal is:
 - o (1) for your Christian life in general
 - o (2) for the mission God has given you as an individual, and
 - o (3) for the mission God has given us as a congregation
- Peter makes this clear in the next verse

b. Always keep your whole way of life pure among the gentiles, so that as they speak evil about you as though you're criminals, because of your good deeds (which they're watching) they might give honor to God on that day when He returns to judge the world.

Q8: The congregations Peter's writing to are a mixed bag; some Jews, but probably mostly gentiles who used to worship pagan gods. Why does he call unbelievers “gentiles?”

- He's emphasizing that Christians are a “new people” in God's eyes, called out and chosen from among the pagans of the world just like Israel was (cf. 1 Peter 2:8-9)

Q9: Most English translations render this as “maintain good conduct among the gentiles.” Is Peter only concerned with outward conduct or behavior? What is he saying, here?

- He's concerned with everything, *outward and inward* – your *whole way of life* must be pure among the gentiles
- This is the same thing he wrote before:
 - o **“Like obedient children, don't conform yourselves to the wicked lusts [you had] during your earlier ignorance, but, just as He who called you is holy, so you yourselves must be holy in your whole way of life – because it was written, ‘You must be holy, because I am holy,’ (1 Peter 1:14-15)**

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- Peter doesn't want you to be kind and Christlike to unbelievers, but drop the mask as soon as you turn your back
 - o God's word calls us to honest sincerity in the way we live our lives; *an inward desire for holiness that produces honest outward behavior*

Q10: What kind of attitude does Peter expect unbelievers to have towards Christians? What is it about Christians that unbelievers are going to speak evil of?

- He expects unbelievers to speak evil of Christians as though they're criminals, law-breakers, and dangers to society
- I think they speak evil of Christians because of the holy way they live their lives – because Christians operate and live according to such a different moral code, unbelievers are repulsed by it, and slander them as though they're criminals
 - o They are offended by God's morality, God's law and God's standards, and they hate people who try to live that out in daily life
- Not *everybody* lashes out and speaks evil about Christians because of their holy way of life, of course - but a vocal minority of people do, and the great mass of society follows passive alongside like sheep
 - o *People can be steered and directed*; we saw this with the crowds at Jesus' trial before Pilate, and we see it now with the sexual revolution in America and the West
 - o And, people are often steered and directed by leaders who are totally opposed to God, His law, His morality and His standards

Q11: Where do you see this on display on our society, today?

- Today, we perhaps see this most often when it comes to issues of sexuality (e.g. homosexuality and transgenderism), religious exclusivism and abortion
 - o (1) Bernie Sanders and his "religious test" for a recent Office of Management and Budget appointee
 - o (2) Transgender activism
 - o (3) Homosexual activism
 - o (4) The abortion industry (i.e. Planned Parenthood); Albert Mohler has called it "the sacrament of the left"

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- The Christian position on each of these issues (and others) *produces a very intense, angry and passionate reaction from the secular forces in our society* (media, celebrities, social media, etc.)
- The Christian position on these issues is often seem as backward at best, and criminal at worst – and society quickly attempts to shame the object of its wrath into conformity
 - o (1) Russel Vought was made to sit and endure a lecture from Bernie Sanders, a sitting U.S. Senator, to get through a confirmation hearing
 - o (2) “Transgender” parents and/or activists often sue or leverage media to force others to *accept and celebrate* their views
 - o (3) Homosexual activists often do likewise, especially in the wake of *Obergefell v. Hodges*
 - o (4) The pro-life activists who filmed the now infamous Planned Parenthood videos in 2016 were charged by the California State Attorney with 14 counts of filming without permission²
 - These were later dismissed by the San Francisco Superior Court, but one count of conspiracy to invade privacy was allowed to go forward
- All this is *just a brief taste* of what it means to live in a secular society that hates all absolute claims of morality and eternity
 - o Peter’s day was similar (it was an extraordinarily syncretistic religious atmosphere), but worse for exclusivists like the Jews and *particularly* the Christians, because they were “new”
 - o And yet, Peter told those Christians, **“always keep your whole way of life pure among the unbelieving nations, so that as they speak evil about you as though you’re criminals, because of your good deeds (which they’re watching) they might give honor to God on that day when He returns to judge the world.”**

Q12: Why does Peter want you to keep your whole way of life pure among the gentiles?

² See Alexandra Desanctis, “[California Court Dismisses 14 Criminal Charges against Center for Medical Progress](#),” in *National Review* (21JUN17).

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- So you'll win then to Christ!
- So they'll be on the *right side*, and give honor to Christ when He returns to judge the world because they belong to Him!
- They're watching you, and how you behave in response to the pressures and persecutions from society – *and how you live your life in light of all this has a bearing on their eternal destiny!*
 - o Never forget – God saved you so you'd be a holy priest for Him
 - o Every moment of every single day you represent Him in everything you do, and people are watching you
- Now, for the hard part . . .

Q13 (GROUP DISCUSSION):

- How do you keep your whole way of life pure among unbelievers (i.e. "gentiles") in such a way that, as these unbelievers see the slander and accusations of criminality, wrongdoing or cultural deviance society levels at Christians, they see your good deeds and (hopefully) come to Christ?
- A lot of advice you get from the pulpit is from well-meaning Pastors who *actually have no idea what it's like to live and work in a secular world!*
 - o Their advice is frequently well-meaning and heartfelt, but divorced from practical reality
 - o I recently heard a good sermon from such a Pastor, who urged Christians to, "be bold, like Jesus! He didn't tip-toe around, trying to friendship people to faith! He was bold and fearless! That's how we should be!"
 - o Anybody who works in a secular work environment knows this is useless advice from a practical standpoint
 - If you don't believe me, try to "be bold and uncompromising" in the office Monday morning with the co-worker in the next cubicle – I'm sure your Pastor will take you on as a staff member as compensation once HR terminates you 😊
- I want to spend the rest of our time in this passage considering how we can do this, *in a practical way, in the real world, starting tomorrow morning* – **so, how do we do this?**
- A few principles:
 - o **(1)** Realize people don't hate you, they hate who you represent

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- (2) Never retaliate in kind
- (3) Realize that many people don't know *convictional*, *passionate*, *knowledgeable* Christians (*EX: my own co-worker accounts [Wes, Mark]*), so their prejudice is likely second-hand, fueled by media stereotypes and strawmen
 - **Convictional** = you actually believe the Bible, believe the Gospel, and that drives how you live your life
 - **Passionate** = you actually believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and nobody comes to the Father but through Him
 - **Knowledgeable** = your love God and you know His word
- (4) Realize that all this means you have a unique opportunity to show and represent God, Christ and His Gospel as a “normal” person, if you choose to use it
- (5) Always remember who you represent,
- (6) Realize that if people know you're a reasonable person and level-headed person, you'll have an opportunity to speak truth into their lives on important issues
- A few general suggestions:
 - (1) Find a way to let the people you work with know you're a Christian at the beginning of your working relationship, so it's out on the table – and then *keep mentioning this* at appropriate intervals
 - I suggest you *put particular emphasis on how you serve in church*, because that is how your faith is lived out in a very practical and passionate way – it is your door to put “flesh on the bones” of your faith, so it isn't generic
 - I assume you're passionate about how you serve the Lord, because that's why you chose to serve in that capacity; *so talk about it!*
 - If you're not serving the Lord in some capacity through some ministry in your congregation, it will be very difficult to speak of your faith, because you'll have no “works” to prove that faith ☹
 - You can't talk about passionately about something you don't experience (e.g. coffee)

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- Your faith is proven by works, and without that practical dimension to your faith in Christ, you have nothing to talk about except generic “mushiness”
- (2) Never neglect an opportunity to plant a “faith-flag,” and stake a position for the Gospel and for truth
 - *EX: comments from co-workers* (“not a righteous thing to do;” “people surprise me sometimes,” etc.)
- (3) If you’re in a politically correct environment, try to communicate the Gospel using the “compare/contrast religions” approach to get your foot in the door - *this has been particularly helpful for me!*
 - Other people are planting “faith flags” of their own, so listen for them and take advantage of the opportunities!
- (4) Pivot away from side issues (e.g. rapture, heaven, Baptist vs. Presbyterian, how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, etc.) and get *to the Gospel as quickly as you possibly can!*
- (5) Be prepared to give an answer for why you believe what you believe
 - You won’t be smooth, articulate or confident when you first start doing this – don’t worry about it
 - You will get better with practice, just like you did with driving
 - You don’t need a pre-printed script, because there won’t be time for one, and you’ll sound like a bad salesman
 - You need knowledge, conviction and passion, and the will to use it to spread the Gospel in your own contexts
- People are naturally curious about foreigners
 - Their language is odd, their culture is different, their way of living is quirky, and they’re exotic and mysterious
- Christians are foreigners and temporary residents here - our language is odd, our culture *should* be different, and our way of living should be *very different*:
 - (1) If we let people know we’re Christians
 - (2) If we seize opportunities to plant “faith flags” at appropriate moments
 - (3) If we think of ways to turn conversations on relevant cultural and moral issues towards the Gospel, *and implement these strategies!*

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- (4) If we're prepared to *never* respond in anger, rage or petty vindictiveness towards false accusations or slander about our faith or our God from people who are brainwashed by a godless society and blinded by Satan,
- (5) If people know us to be *knowledgeable*, *sane*, *convictional* and *passionate* Christians
 - We'll have opportunities to share our faith, if we'll only take them

3. THOUGHT-FLOW DIAGRAM & GREEK TRANSLATION NOTES:

I can hardly think of anybody who'd be interested in these notes. I made them for myself as I studied the passage, and I need somewhere to store them so I find them later. This is as good a place as any. Please feel free to ignore all this, if you wish! These are not preaching notes, and are not intended to be. Nobody in his right mind should mistake them for teaching notes. They're simply translation notes about particular points of grammar and syntax.

a. Translation (1 Peter 2:11 – 2:12):

Dear friends, I'm begging you – because you're foreigners and temporary residents here, always keep far away from the worldly lusts which are battling against your souls.

Always keep your whole way of life pure among the gentiles, so that as they speak evil about you as though you're criminals, because of your good deeds (which they're watching) they might give honor to God on that day when He returns to judge the world.

b. Thought-flow Diagram:³

DIRECT ADDRESS (kind, friendly, earnest tone)	- Dear friends,
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³ This format is based off Richard Young's discussion on thought-flow diagrams (*Intermediate Greek* [Nashville, TN: B&H, 1994], 268-271) and the format in the ZECNT commentary series. It blends both versions, and I'm not entirely sure it gets the point across well, but I'm using it for now.

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STRONG EXHORTATION	○ I'm begging you –
reason for exhortation	▪ because you're foreigners and temporary residents here,
EXHORTATION	○ always keep far away from the worldly lusts which are battling against your souls.
more detailed exhortation	▪ Always keep your whole way of life pure among the gentiles,
explanation	• so that
<i>happening same time as Christian's good deeds</i>	○ as they speak evil about you as though you're criminals,
<i>reason for result (below)</i>	○ because of your good deeds
<i>aside for emphasis</i>	▪ (which they're watching)
<i>hoped for result</i>	○ they might give honor to God on that day when He returns to judge the world.

c. Translation Notes:

- **Row #1:** Greek text (UBS-5);
- **Row #2:** parsing;
- **Row #3:** gloss;
- **Row #4:** brief syntax notes;
- **Row #5:** rough, ugly, but more “literal” translation;
- **Row #6:** smoother, slightly more colloquial translation

Ἀγαπητοί
vpm
Beloved
<i>vocative sense</i>
Beloved,
Dear friends,

Ἀγαπητοί. The usual gloss for this is “beloved.” I think this is a bit too high-brow and stuffy. It sounds like you’re reading Shakespeare, or something written in deliberately archaic prose. A fair equivalent today would be something like “dear friends” (NEB; Michaels [*1 Peter*, 115]) or “beloved friends.”

παρακαλῶ

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1 st ,s,p,a,i
I am begging
<i>descriptive, simple active</i>
I am begging,
I'm begging you -

ὡς	παροίκους	καὶ	παρεπιδήμους
conj	apm	conj	apm
as, like	foreigners	and	resident aliens
<i>causal, appealing to identity or state</i>	<i>adverbial; mod. ἀπέχεσθαι</i>	<i>comparison</i>	<i>adverbial; mod. ἀπέχεσθαι</i>
as foreigners and resident alien,			
because you're foreigners and temporary residents here,			

ὡς. This conjunction is a puzzle in this passage. Greg Forbes sees it functioning here as making the nouns which follow into appositions, further describing these “dear friends.”⁴ This is unlikely and awkward. It is far more appropriate to see Peter appealing to their newfound status as God’s own people as motivation for obeying the commands which follow (“**because** you’re foreigners . . .”).

παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους. This is yet *another* instance where Peter applies titles reserved for the Israelites to Christians (Michaels [1 Peter, 116]). This should cause even the most die-hard dispensationalist to pause for a moment or two. I know, because I’m a reluctant dispensationalist, and I’m pausing for a moment or two myself . . . ☺

ἀπέχεσθαι	τῶν	σαρκικῶν	ἐπιθυμιῶν	αἵτινες	στρατεύονται	κατὰ	τῆς	ψυχῆς	τὴν
p,a,inf	gpf	gpf	gpf	rel,npf	3 rd ,pl,p,m,i	conj	gsf	gsf	asf
to keep away from	of the	fleshly, worldly, carnal, sinful	lusts, cravings, desires	whoever, whatever, whichever	they are fighting, warring, doing battle	against	the	soul	the
<i>anarthrous simple, complementary, iterative</i>		<i>attributive adjective</i>	<i>disassociation</i>	<i>mod. ἐπιθυμιῶν; subject of clause</i>	<i>descriptive; indirect middle</i>	<i>opposition</i>	<i>obj.prep</i>		
keep away from the worldly lusts which are doing battle against the soul.									
always keep far away from the worldly lusts which are battling against your souls.									

κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς. There is great disagreement over whether “soul” refers to the incorporeal, “inner man” (1:22), or to “life” itself (1:9). Different commentators

⁴ “Both nouns are in appos. to an implied ὑμᾶς as the obj. of παρακαλῶ,” (Greg Forbes, *1 Peter*, in EGGNT [Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014; Kindle ed.], KL 2469-2470).

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take different positions. Practically speaking, it doesn't matter for exposition. The point is that worldly lusts destroy you and spiritually weaken you.

For stylistic reasons, I changed this to a plural.

ἀναστροφὴν	ὑμῶν	ἐν	τοῖς	ἔθνεσιν	ἔχοντες	καλήν
asf	2 nd ,pl.g	prep	dpn	dpn	papnprn	asf
way of life, conduct, behavior	your	on, by	the	gentiles, nations, unbelievers	you are having	good
direct object of participle	possession (if καλήν is attributive, drop)	spatial	obj.prep		imperative; iterative;subject	predicate adjective (possibly attributive); mod. ἀναστροφὴν
You must always keep your way of life good among the gentiles,						
Always keep your whole way of life pure among the gentiles,						

ἔχοντες. Forbes suggests the participle is attendant circumstance, which means it would simply follow on the heels of Peter's exhortation from the previous verse (" . . . keep far away from the worldly lusts which are doing battle against the soul, **and keep** your whole way of life pure . . .").⁵ Yet, as Forbes went on to acknowledge, the participle obviously carries hortatory force. Michaels also quibbled that this doesn't *quite* fit the criteria for imperatival participles, but admits that, because of its link to the infinitive, "it not only functions imperatively but carries the main thrust of Peter's command."⁶

So, why isn't it an imperative, again!? This murmuring about strict grammatical categories is meaningless. It seems best to take it as an imperative. This sentence explains why they should keep far away from worldly lusts. It should stand on its own.

ἀναστροφὴν . . . ἔχοντες καλήν. This one is interesting. The participle is an imperative (contra. the NKJV, which seems to render it adverbially, referring to time).

I think the word ἀναστροφὴν should be rendered to catch more than merely outward, external behavior (cf. my comments on 1 Pet 1:15, 18). Peter is not telling them to be outwardly good among the Gentiles, but inwardly evil. He's speaking about their entire way of life, including their thoughts, motives and intents. Most English translations (e.g. ESV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NET, NLT, NEB, Phillips) render this as "conduct." I think it's rather more than that – particularly in light of Peter's

⁵ Forbes (*1 Peter*, KL 2501-2502).

⁶ Michaels (*1 Peter*, 117).

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commands to be holy, to not use their freedom from Satan as a cloak for wickedness, and to consider themselves as God's slaves. There is more than external conduct at work here; Peter refers to your entire way of life – including the inner man.

For καλήν, in this context will “good” really do? I don't think it will. What is “good” in reference to? Obviously, a moral standard of some sort – God's. How can we catch the sense that God commands us to maintain a godly way of life among unbelievers? The ESV tried out “honorable,” which is a *bit* different, but really doesn't get us anywhere. The reader is still left to ponder “who decides what is honorable?” Phillips rendered it “good and right.” Same problem. Probably a rendering like “pure” or “holy” will do the trick best. I'm more comfortable with “pure,” in the sense of “free from moral fault or guilt.”⁷

τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. This word could mean “Gentiles,” or it could mean “nations” (i.e. pagan nations). How should it be translated? If you believe Peter wrote his letters to primarily Jewish Christian congregations, perhaps you'd keep “Gentiles” or “nations.” The terms have a particularly Jewish flavor to them, especially in light of the OT. A Jew would get it.

But, if you don't believe Peter wrote to majority Jewish Christian congregations, how should you render it? Does “Gentiles” really do the trick? Is that what Peter was literally getting at? They could live like demons among Jews, but if a Gentile comes along - be good? Doubt it. Peter seems to be referring to “unbelievers.”

Should it be translated it as “unbelievers?” The NLT went with “unbelieving neighbors.” The NIV and NEB chose “pagans.” The NET went with “non-Christians.” Phillips chose “surrounding peoples in your different countries,” which is clearly an attempt to retain the “nations” sense of the Greek. Lattimore chose “the heathen.” Most other English translations, which are often more essentially literal than these, went with “Gentiles.” Which one is better? Which one is *clearer*?

Sometimes, I think we need to make a distinction between meaning and clarity. The rendering “Gentiles” or “nations” is more technically accurate. But, the translation “unbelievers” is (I believe) much more clear. If something is clearer, is it not, in reality, more accurate?

⁷ *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003), s.v. “pure,” 3.b.

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However, *could* there be something more? Peter likes to speak of Christians as a brotherhood, a community in exile. He deliberately applies Israelite prophecies directly to these Christians, throughout his letter (see 2:4-10!). Does he use the phrase “nations” deliberately, perhaps even ironically? Christians are not the “true Israel,” as though they’ve replaced Israel. But, they certainly are a “new people,” united not by blood, but by shared faith in Christ and adoption into God’s family. Peter could be emphasizing that all who reject Christ are from “pagan nations,” cut off from God. By contrast, Christians are God’s people (cf. 2:10; alongside the Israelites, whose time is not now); his “true nation.”

I think we need to try and retain the sense of “Gentile” or “nations.” How to do it?

ἵνα
conj
for the purpose of
so that,

ἐν	ὧ	καταλαλοῦσιν	ὑμῶν	ὡς	κακοποιῶν
prep	dsn	3 rd ,pl,p,a,i	2 nd ,pl,g	conj	gpm
in	which	they are speaking evil, slandering	of you	as, like	evildoer
reference	<i>refers back to ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν; or adverbial phrase</i>	<i>descriptive; refers to gentiles</i>	reference	<i>perspective of slanderers</i>	<i>attributive (but predicate sense)</i>
(in reference to which they are speaking evil about you as evildoers)					
as they speak evil about you as though you’re criminals,					

ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν. This phrase is a subordinate clause which frames what he’s about to say. The sense of the sentence is that Christians must always keep their whole way of life pure among the unbelievers so that . . . because of your good deeds (which they’re watching) they might give honor to God on the day of His visitation.

The prepositional phrase ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ties Peter’s purpose clause to a context. The relative pronoun refers back to “your whole way of life.” This is the object that the unbelievers are slandering Christians about. Holy living, from pure motives and an honest heart, is a source of ridicule to unbelievers. They hate it.

Discussion on 1 Peter 2:11-12

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Wallace suggests the phrase ἐν ᾧ here could be functioning adverbially, and not be referring to a grammatical antecedent at all.⁸ That is possible. BDAG notes this construction marks the state or circumstances under which something occurs (s.v. “2581 ἐν,” 7).

No doubt, it *does* refer to a particular circumstance, and Peter has given us more than enough information to conclude he’s referring to unbelievers who slander Christians about their holy living. I prefer to take it as referring to “your whole way of life,” and yet translate it as though it were an adverb modifying καταλαλοῦσιν, indicating time (“**as they** speak evil of you [i.e. your whole way of life] as though you were evildoers . . .”).

How do we bring across this context framing in English? Should we render it as “so that, **in reference to your whole way of life**, as they are slandering you . . .”? If this sterling prose is really the best we can do, then I’d rather read an inter-office memo about break-room cleanliness. The NASB offered this gem, “so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers . . .” Yuck.

I think something like, “as they speak evil about you . . .” works well. I’d really like to specify the antecedent “about **your pure lives**,” but I think it may be a bridge too far. I’d have to do too much explaining in class, because no English translations go into that detail. I can just bring it out in preaching.

ὡς. This one is particularly interesting here. Does it refer to the state or character the unbelievers see Christians in (e.g. “as they speak evil of you **as though you’re** criminals”)? Or, does it refer to the state or character of the unbelievers doing this slander (e.g. “as they speak evil of you **like the criminals they are**”)? I think the former option makes the best sense, but I initially rendered it the other way. It’s intriguing.

ἐκ	τῶν	καλῶν	ἔργων
prep	gpm	gpm	gpm
from	of the	good	deeds, works
<i>means, reason</i>	<i>obj.prep</i>		
because of your good deeds			
because of your good deeds			

⁸ Daniel Wallace *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 342-343.

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τῶν καλῶν ἔργων. In this case, these “good deeds” are simply the fruit of keeping “your whole way of life pure among the unbelieving nations.” Philipps renders this “how well you conduct yourselves.” The NLT went with, “your honorable behavior.” I think they’re spot on, even though I’m reluctant to go that far in translation.

ἐποπτεύοντες
παρρημ
they are watching, seeing, observing
<i>apposition to καλῶν ἔργων; descriptive; refers to gentiles</i>
[which] they are watching,
(which they’re watching),

δοξάσωσιν	τὸν	θεὸν	ἐν	ἡμέρα	ἐπισκοπῆς
3 rd ,pl,aor,a,sub	asm	asm	prep	dsf	gsf
they might glorify, praise, honor	the	God	in	day	of his visitation
<i>purpose clause w/iva;constative</i>	<i>direct object</i>		<i>time</i>	<i>pbj.prep</i>	<i>partitive</i>
they might give honor to God at [the] day of His visitation.					
they might give honor to God on that day when He returns to judge the world.					

ἐν ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς. A wooden rendering for this would be “at/in the day of His visitation.” What is Peter referring to? Who is he referring to? He seems to be referring to Christ, who will return to judge the world, reward the righteous and punish the wicked. I’m not aware of any NT reference which speaks about *God* returning to judge the world and establish order. There are numerous references to that in the OT, but in the NT that is further defined as Jesus’ role. Is Peter explicitly calling Jesus God? Very interesting.

How should this be translated? I’d be launching off into interpretation on this point with something like “**when He returns to judge the world.**” I could leave it with something like, “**when He returns/arrives/comes.**” However, I think a translation ought to be clear when it can be, so I’ll opt to be specific and identify this as the day of judgment.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect here is that Peter doesn’t say Christians should live pure and holy lives so unbelievers would come to Christ. He says they should do it so unbelievers would “give honor to God on that day when He arrives.” Of course, you can extrapolate and *presume* Peter is referring to salvation. But, it is interesting that Peter doesn’t say that. Why wasn’t he explicit? I’m not sure.