**Life Group Notes – Sunday 23rd June 2024**

**The Road to Exile**

**2 Chronicles 36: 11-23 –** This is the account of the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC and the subsequent proclamation by the Persian King Cyrus in 538 BC (v 22-23) which allowed exiles to return to Jerusalem. (Note in the Jewish Old Testament, where the order of books is different to our Bibles, these are the last verses of the last book).

**Hebrews 11:13–16 –** the Greek word (‘parepidemoi’) translated as ‘strangers’ in verse 13 in the NIV may be better translated as ‘exiles’ as in the New Living Translation

**1 Peter 1:1 and 2:11 –** the word translated as ‘strangers’ in the NIV is again the same Greek word which may be translated as ‘exiles’.

1. Why is the Babylonian exile such a critical event in the Old Testament? How would the Jews have perceived it in relation to the Exodus and the Promised Land?
2. 2 Chronicles 36:14-16 How do you respond to the thought that the exile was a punishment by God for the persistent sins of the people despite all His warnings? Why is God’s punishment seen as necessary? What can punishment achieve? (See 2 Corinthians 7:10 ‘*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation’*).
3. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 The book ends on a more positive note with Cyrus allowing the exiled Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem. But only a ‘remnant’ chose to do so. What do you think distinguished these Jews from those who chose to remain in Babylon?
4. Even after the return from exile, it was the belief of many Jews in the subsequent centuries that the exile would only truly be over when the Messiah, the Son of David and the King of the Jews, came and restored God’s kingdom. How did this belief affect the first Christians? How did they interpret it?
5. The writer to the Hebrews (see 11:13-16) says the great people of faith in the Old Testament saw themselves as ‘exiles’ and ‘pilgrims’ in this world and were seeking a better, heavenly country. How much do we feel comfortable in this world? In what ways do we feel alienated from it? What does it mean for us to seek a ‘heavenly’ country?
6. 1 Peter 1:1 and 2:11 Why do you think Peter describes his Christian audience (both Jews and Gentiles) as ‘exiles’? What do you think lay behind his use of the word? What attitude do you think he was trying to cultivate by using this word?