

Theme: In this age Christians are sojourning exiles, serving with unbelievers in our common kingdom and culture, as we long for our heavenly home.

I. Intro - Fundamentalisms Two Responses to Culture

- A. Originally - we are exiles, avoid culture
- B. Currently - we must take back America - our Promised Land
- C. Oddly - many try to do both!
 - 1. Avoid culture if possible
 - 2. If contact, take it back - make it Christendom!
- D. How does God call us to live in our culture?
- E. How do sojourning exiles live?

II. The People of God in Exile

- A. Background - The people in exile (vv1-3)
 - 1. Exile - vv1-2
 - 2. Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (v3)
- B. The unimaginable trauma of the exile
 - 1. Removed from the promised land
 - 2. Culture that is not friendly to Judaism
 - 3. Culture that destroyed Judah
 - 4. Culture full of foreign gods
- C. If this sounds familiar - it should!

- 1. Remember the NT metaphor - we are exiles
- 2. Same cultural position as they were!
- 3. We are not in Kansas anymore Toto!

III. God's Instructions to His People In Exile

- A. Recognize I sovereignly placed you here (v4)
 - 1. "I carried into exile to Babylon" (v4)
 - 2. Same true for us - we are aliens by God's call
 - 3. Remember last weeks teaching on our status
 - 4. Acts 17:26 - God determines times, places for nations & peoples
- B. Settle down - you will be there for a while
 - 1. Build houses, plant gardens (v5) - staying
 - a. Patriarchs lived in tents as aliens (Heb 11:9)
 - b. The people must prepare for a long stay
 - c. This must be our attitude - in for the long haul
 - 2. Marriage, children - increase, not decrease (v6)
 - a. God wants us to have families
 - b. God wants us to prosper and increase
 - c. Some Christians against this - end is near
 - d. We must live and plan for the future
 - 3. Seek peace and prosperity of Babylon (v7)
 - a. Peace and prosperity - for evil Babylon!

- b. Pray for it - not against it
 - c. Seek its peace & prosperity - work for it
 - d. This is not isolationism! Active engagement!
 - e. We must pray & work for good of common kingdom
- C. Beware of false prophets (vv8-9)
- 1. There were false prophets who must be shunned
 - 2. Spoke in Yahweh's name - but not truth!
 - 3. They said God was giving them promised land back now
 - 4. False teaching destroys - be careful what you hear!
 - 5. A lot of false ideas on 'taking back Christian America'
 - 6. Example - Westboro Baptist Church
 - 7. False prophets also gloom and doom (Isaiah's day)
 - 8. Example: gay marriage will utterly destroy family
 - 9. These false ideas producing bad results - in culture & church
- D. Live with a multi-generational perspective
- 1. Marry, have children, increase (v6)
 - 2. Seventy years - grandchildren inherit (v10)
 - 3. Our difficult cultural life is not short term
 - 4. Must keep eye on future, pass on faith
 - 5. Most eschatology is too short-sighted today
 - 6. It will probably be generations before Jesus returns

- E. Keep heart set on God and the promised land
- 1. Keep seeking God - don't give up (vv11-13)
 - 2. Culture will say Promised Land does not exist
 - 3. You will get to promised land (v14)
 - 4. Live, pray, work in Babylon - but it is not home
 - 5. Don't get weary - keep eyes on God and heaven

IV. Applying the Word - Communion

- A. Our Need - strength for today, hope for tomorrow
- 1. Admiral Stockdale words
 - a. POW's who survived had same attitude
 - b. "We will make it home - but not by Christmas"
 - c. Expectation, but not unfounded hope
 - 2. This must be our attitude: expectant realism
 - a. Christ will return and kingdom consummated
 - b. We are sustained by this hope
 - c. But we labor with long term view
- B. Come to the Table for Strength and Hope

God's Sojourning Exile People (Part 2)

Jeremiah 29:1-14
 Advent Readings
 December 5, 2010
 Communion
 Psalm 67:1-3

The Trauma of the Exile

- Removed from the promised land
- Culture is not friendly to Judaism
- Culture that destroyed Judah
- Culture full of foreign gods

From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and **he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.** Acts 17:26