

Message: **“BEING THE CHURCH IN TOUGH TIMES”**

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:4-14 (NIV)

God’s people have been exiled to Babylon where they will be captives for 70 years. He sends instructions to them. His message has meaning for us as we minister in a Babylonian type society. How are we to face the reality of our situation?

**I. GET GOD’S PERSPECTIVE.** v.4 “This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon....”

**II. GEAR FOR PRODUCTIVITY.** vv.5-6 "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.”

**III. GUARD AGAINST PRETENDERS.** vv.8-9 “Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9 They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD.”

**IV. GRIP GOD’S PROMISES.** v.10 “This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.”

**V. GLORY IN GOD’S PLANS.** v.11 “For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

**VI. GO TO PRAYER!** vv.12-14 “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. “ **AND** v.7 “Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

The impact of these verses is that (1) God is calling us to live in our present reality; (2) to invest our energies where He has placed us; (3) to be His representatives in a world that opposes Him and His people; (4) to be God’s channel of blessing to all we encounter, regardless of our circumstances, or how we feel about the situation; (5) to wait patiently and expectantly for the ultimate deliverance which He has promised us.