



The Babylon Posture Pt 2: Building in Babylon!

March 19, 2023

Holy Text: Jeremiah 29:1-14

Last week...

- We began to look at this encouraging Text in Jeremiah.
- We observed the historical context: God's judgment upon His stiff-necked and idolatrous people, sending them away to Babylon for 70 years.
- We took some time to example this captivity...
- We also considered and discussed the spiritual parallels between Judah's physical captivity in Babylon and our "spiritual captivity" in spiritual Babylon.
- These kinds of metaphorical statements and spiritual realities are not foreign to Scripture:

1 Peter 5:13 (KJV) *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.*

Revelation 17:3-6 (KJV) *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

Revelation 11:8 (KJV) *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

- We were reminded...
 1. Of Jeremiah's call: "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." (Jer 1:10)
 2. Of Jeremiah's message: God's judgment due to Judah's idolatry (2 Kings 21:1-18, 23:26-27; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21)
 3. Of our spiritual state: "We live in spiritual Babylon! All around us we find the celebrations of idolatry and pagan worship. There is gross and perverted sexual immorality and the worship of death. There is institutionalized pressure to bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image (the cultural false ideas, use of certain unbiblical words, and the reception and acceptance the demons of the day)."
 4. Of the culture music that commands us to bow down! (Dan 3:4-7)
 5. Of the courage needed speak truth, and if necessary, brave the fiery furnace. (Dan 3:16-20)
 6. That we are the Church of Jesus Christ, ultimately triumphant! (Matt 16:18; Rev 17:14)
 7. That we, nevertheless, through much tribulation, must enter the Kingdom of God. (John 16:33; Acts 14:22)
- Today, let us walk through this hopeful and confidence-inspiring Text!

Thoughts on the Jeremiah 29:1-14:

1. First, let us see that the words from Jeremiah are prophetic words. They come from God's prophet, which means they come from God. (vv.1-3)
 - Today, we have the Holy Scriptures, which we believe are inspired by God, inerrant (without error), infallible (incapable of error), and sufficient (all we need).
 - Beloved, God's Word must be embraced! Received with humility! Obeyed!
 - Remember:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Hebrews 4:12 (KJV) *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

James 1:21-22 (KJV) *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

James 1:25 (KJV) *But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

2. Note that other "prophets" are also among the residue! (vv.1-3)
 - In fact, when God judges, He is no respecter of persons: titles, human authorities, or even religious leaders are subject to God's decrees!
 - Also note that God, in His holy providence, used a pagan nation to chastise His stiff-necked people...the "unholy" to chastise "the holy." What a humiliation!
3. In case there was doubt about the cause of this sad event, God reminded them that He did it Himself. (v.4) God caused this captivity. God sent calamity upon His own people. Nebuchadnezzar may have been the king of Babylon, but...

Proverbs 21:1 (KJV) *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

4. Despite the just judgment of God, there is still mercy. In the midst of the captivity, our LORD commanded that the captives... (vv.5-6)
 - Build houses. Our dwellings are important. Home is the center of daily life!
 - Dwell in them. The only thing this could mean is to live life!
 - Plant gardens. Cultivate and enjoy the riches of the land!
 - Eat the fruit! Be physically nourished. Don't waste away in Babylon!
 - Take wives. Create new, productive households!
 - Begat sons and daughters. Think generationally. Be fruitful and take dominion in Babylon!
 - Do not diminish; increase in the midst of captivity!

5. This reads like God told them to settle in where they were and do the things in Babylon they were supposed to be doing in Judah! Don't let longing for "the way things were at home" prevent fruitfulness where you are!
 - Don't misunderstand the application here.
 - We believe revival and reformation are still possible in our communities, state, and nation!
 - However, if such isn't occurring, how then shall we live?
 - We should live "looking for the coming of the LORD!"

2 Peter 3:9-13 (KJV) *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

6. The prophetic prescription giving to the exiles is similar to the many NT admonishments to build and live:
 - Romans 12:9-21, 13
 - Ephesians 5-6
 - Colossians 3
 - Hebrews 12-13
 - All of 1 Peter!
7. In Verse 7, God also commands the exiles to seek the peace of the city and pray for it. (v.7)
 - Please understand this does not mean God condoned Babylon's paganism. Christian, beware of those who use the desire for peace as a cloak for accepting sin. We do not exchange purity for peace.
 - Rather, God's people were to pray for peace for their own sake; God wanted (and wants!) His children to live in a quiet and calm environment:

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (KJV) *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

8. Jeremiah then warns the residue of Judah against listening to false prophets and false dreams. (vv.8-9)
 - False prophets would be "in the midst," still prophesying falsely...in captivity!!!
 - You'd think their circumstances would temper such foolishness...but no!
 - CRC, PLEASE (I'm begging) beware of those telling you what you want to hear, even in difficult times. It's not always the truth...even if God's Name is used!

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (KJV) *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

9. The good news is that God Himself would bring Judah's captivity to an end at the appointed time. May we always remember that only He can create revival and restoration. (v.10)
10. Despite the severe punishment, God still thinks kind and loving thoughts towards the apple of His eye. (v.11) I believe He loves us deeply, sees our predicament, and has plans to establish a sound church and healthy households in the midst of Babylon!
11. In verse twelve, we can be reminded that *Divine punishment is for Divine Purpose.*
 - After severe chastisement, God's people would be humble and would call upon Him.
 - Sadly, sometimes, such discipline is the only way we can have our flesh (wants and desires) dead enough to do so. (v.12)
12. *The fruit of Captivity should be Contriteness; Hard times should lead to Humility.* A desire to seek the LORD should arise from our pain. A new meekness and a fresh longing to worship and love Him with all of our hearts! **Circumstances should Sanctify.** (v.13)
13. The LORD promised Judah He would gather them back into their land. After their punishment he would cause them to return. (v.14) What a kind and gracious God! Indeed,

Lamentations 3:22-23 (KJV) *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

14. CRC, this narrative concerns Judah in a certain historical context, so we must be careful with our applications. But I believe there is much we can learn:

- **We live in Spiritual Babylon, characterized by strategic principalities and governmental wickedness and sin.**
- **Since the LORD has not yet returned, we must learn to live lives of sustained godliness in the midst of such!**
- **We must do so with love, holiness, and build our households according to righteousness.**
- **We should not acquiesce to diminishing in captivity. Rather, but must strive to increase and take dominion!**
- **We must pray for our cities and nations while remembering our home is elsewhere!**
- **The unholiness that accompanies cultural captivity should cause us to be and stay humble and repentant.**
- **We must call upon the LORD with all of our heart!**

Applications for Us: Keep Building!

Don't forget, we are the church of the living God!

1 Timothy 3:14-16 (KJV) *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

1 Peter 2:9 (KJV) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Matthew 16:18 (KJV) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

So CRC, Keep Building...even in Babylon!

Homework: re-read these verses! :)

1. Build on the Rock of the Word of God! (Matt 7:24-27; 2 Tim 1:13, 3:16-17)
2. Build with Christ as Head! (1 Cor 11:3; Col 1:15-18)
3. Build through the joyful preaching of the Gospel! (Mk 16:15; Rom 1:16; Php 1:27)
4. Build in love, mercy, and forgiveness! (1 Cor 13; Matt 5:7; Eph 2:4, 4:15-16, 29-32)
5. Build with faith! (Prov 3:5-6; Mk 11:22; Heb 10:21-25; Jam 1:5-7)
6. Build with joyful singing and consistent household worship! (Deut 6:1-12; Eph 5:17-21; Col 3:12-17)
7. Build around the Local Church and the means of Grace (prayer, preaching, fellowship, ordinance, worship, discipline, etc.)! (Acts 2:42-47, 20:7; Heb 10:25)

Upcoming Messages in this series:

“Battling Babylonian Principalities”

“Walking in Spiritual Wisdom and Godly Discernment”

“Taking Dominion in Babylon”

Amen!