

Dynamic Christianity

Jeremiah 29:1-14

Background

The context is a letter to the exiles from God regarding how they should behave and what they should expect. The Israelites had not heard from God for a long time. Prior to the exile, most of Jeremiah's ministry was to speak judgement and call for repentance. But the people did not repent and seek God. This letter is the only really positive message he brings.

For the Jews, the destruction of their cities and the exile was a history changing moment. We read about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 2 Kings 25.

Q1: How must it have felt being taken into exile and seeing the destruction of all that they had established after entering what God had called the Promised Land?

READ Jeremiah 29:1-14

Q2: What do you think would have been the reaction of the Jews to the command in verses 5-7 to settle in, multiply and work for the prosperity of the city?

Q3: What would have been the danger to the Jews of settling down?

There is a norm seen in the Old Testament of the people departing from God when things were going well and going after other gods. This was followed by a time of 'exile' – that is a time when God had to deal severely with them and remove his protection from them. But, in each case, it is followed by a time of renewal or revival.

Q4: When a time of great adversity happens, what temptation does God confront in verses 8-9?

Q5: In the context of the Babylonian exile, how do you think they would have reacted to verses 11-12?

The church in Australia today might be seen as in a period of exile. The church is in decline nationally and with many people going to church is unthinkable.

Q6: From our reading, what might God want us to do during this time?

Q7: What sort of people was God looking to find in exiled people? Can you think of some people in the OT who were examples of this?

Q8: What sort of people is God looking for in Caringbah?

Discuss and pray: How can we remain faithful to God in these difficult times?