



# Thriving IN EXILE

LIVING A VIBRANT FAITH IN A POST CHRISTIAN CULTURE .

## Living In A New Post Christian Reality

Week 1

### Key Text - Daniel 1:1-7

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. 3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. 6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

## **Other Texts**

### **Matthew 16:13-20**

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

### **Jeremiah 29:3-7**

3 The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: 4 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

### **Jonah 4:11**

And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

## **Other Quotes**

### **Faith for Exiles by David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock**

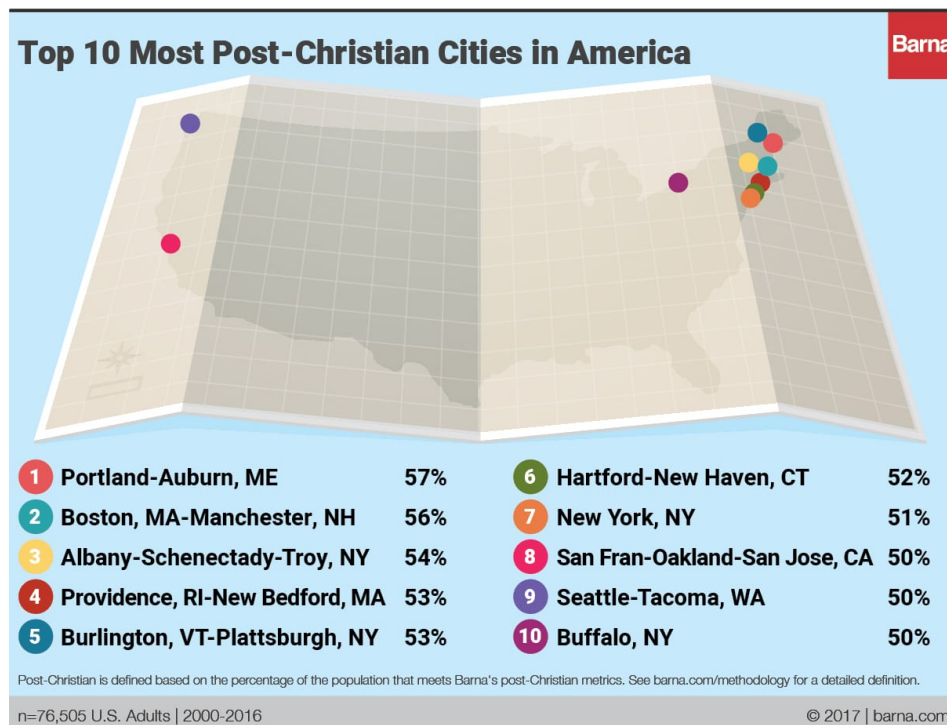
Here is a big data point that keeps us up at night. The 2011 book *You Lost Me* argues that the church has a dropout problem. At the time we collected data for that project, 59 percent of young adults with a Christian background told us they had dropped out of church involvement—some for an extended period of time, some for good. In less than a decade, the proportion of eighteen- to twenty-

nine-year-old dropouts has increased. Today, nearly two-thirds of all young adults who were once regular churchgoers have dropped out at one time or another (64 percent). (p. 15).

**Post Christianity** is the situation in which Christianity is no longer the dominant civil religion of a society but has gradually assumed values, culture, and worldviews that are not necessarily Christian. Post-Christian tends to refer to the loss of Christianity's monopoly in historically Christian societies.[1] For example, although the 2005 Eurobarometer survey indicated that the majority of Europeans hold some form of belief in a higher power, fewer point explicitly to the Christian God.

### Barna - The Most Post-Christian Cities in America: 2017

<https://www.barna.com/research/post-christian-cities-america-2017/>



### How to Reach the West Again. Tim Keller.

But the overall decline of Christian influence in the West is inarguable. Each generation is becoming less religious and less Christian. More than two-thirds of the churches in the United States have plateaued or are in decline.<sup>2</sup> While religion was broadly seen as a social good, or at least benign, increasing numbers of people now see the church as bad for people and a major obstacle

to social progress. Traditional Christian beliefs about sexuality and gender are being viewed as dangerous and restrictive of people's basic civil rights. Instead of wringing our hands over the loss of cultural influence in Western culture, this decline should prompt us to examine ourselves, pray, and work toward a new missionary engagement with Western culture.

Faith for Exiles by David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock Christians whose understanding of the world is framed by the Bible can think about our experience as living in a shift from Jerusalem to digital Babylon. These are two of the ways human society is depicted in the Bible, and they endure today as helpful archetypes of civilization.

Just like most of us where born into Jerusalem and ended up in Babylon, Daniel was born in Jerusalem and ended up in Babylon.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What did you think when you heard the description of the culture in which we live?
2. What stuck out to you in the first verses of Daniel?
3. How have you seen God moving lately?