

“Hope for 2017”

Jeremiah 29:4-14

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity.."

The historical context of these verses: *The Jewish captives were recently transplanted to Babylon, as a result of their disobedience to the LORD. He promised them they would be there for 70 years, at which time he would bring them back to their land.*

- I. In 2017, be **RESPONSIBLE** where you are.
- II. In 2017, be **CAREFUL** what you hear.
- III. In 2017, be **MINDFUL** how you live.
- IV. In 2017, be **SPIRITUAL** in your walk.

I. In 2017, be **RESPONSIBLE** where you are. - *"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive,*

and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace."

- **Responsibly, develop your *LIFE*** - "*..build houses and dwell in them..plant gardens and eat their fruit...*" - The Lord is telling this group of captives in Babylon to develop a normal life there, and plan on settling down for 70 years. He tells them to do the basic things that are necessary for a normal and stable domestic life.
- **Responsibly, grow your *FAMILY*** - "*..Take wives and beget sons and daughters...be increased there..*" - Here the Lord encourages the Israelites to continue growing their families by having children. God wanted the Jewish people to multiply in Babylon, even as they multiplied in Egypt. Exile didn't mean that God forgot about them or wanted to destroy them. Even though they were in a dark place, they were to continue letting their "light" shine thru having more children!
Matt 5:14,16 NKJV - "You are *the light of the world...*"
- **Responsibly, help your *CITY*** - "*..seek the peace of the city..pray to the Lord for it..in its peace you will have peace.*" - Simply put, the Jews were to help and care for their city, even though it was the city of Babylon. God wanted them to do good in their communities and be a blessing to their Babylonian neighbors. Ultimately, God caused them to be in Babylon, and they should be a blessing where they were planted by God. They were to be praying for their city *spiritually*, and helping their city *practically*. This would draw people to the Lord, and create a more peaceful life for themselves.
Matt 5:14,16 NKJV - "You are *the light of the world...*"
"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."
- **There are 3 basic attitudes or approaches that Christians can have** towards their city and the unsaved society around them:
 - ISOLATION* - *Living separate and refusing to interact.*
 - INTIMIDATION* - *Living in fear and afraid to reach out.*
 - INFILTRATION* - *Living in love and courage, penetrating the city for Christ!*

II. In 2017, be *CAREFUL* what you hear. - "*For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord.*"

- **The Lord instructed the Jews in Babylon to be careful to not listen to *LIES* or spiritual *DECEPTION*.** Apparently, there were false prophets among the Jews in Babylon. These false teachers told the Jews in Babylon that they would soon be allowed back to Judah and they should

plan accordingly. God said, "They prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them." This happens today within the Church at times, in the form of false doctrine, false teaching, or unbiblical counsel.

"Potato chip bags these days are about 1/4 chips and 3/4 air.

The potato chip companies can say it's a bag, call it a blag, and even advertise it as a bag, but when you pay for this "bag", chances are you'll get much less than what you thought you would. There are too many "potato chip" people, in our churches today. These people are half worldly, half deceived. You open them up, and they're just full of air!" - Tony Evans

- **The same caution applies to us today - Don't listen to UNGODLY counsel.** The source of it may not be from a "false prophet", but it could be **FALSE** counsel none the less. It might be from a friend, a well intentioned family member, a secular organization, the Wall Street Journal, a university professor, etc... Christians today are surrounded by a multitude of **FALSE & UNGODLY COUNSEL.**
 - *Are you a **single mother...??***
 - *Are you a **lonely unmarried man...??***
 - *Are you an **ambitious businessman...??***
 - *Are you in a **time of financial hardship...??***
 - **Psalm 1:1-2** - "Blessed is the man who walks **NOT** in the counsel of the **ungodly**, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but **his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates** day and night."

III. In 2017, be **MINDFUL how you live.** - "For thus says the Lord: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**"

- **Though prisoners in Babylon, they were to be **MINDFUL** that it wouldn't last forever.** As promised by Jeremiah, the captivity in Babylon would not go beyond seventy years. God had appointed an end to it. One day in the future, the captivity would be over for good, and they were to be **MINDFUL** of this in their daily living!
- **Christians are told the same thing in the New Testament** - the "captivity" we endure in this world of sin and evil, will one day be over for good! Very soon, perhaps after a life lived for 70 years, your personal "captivity" will be at an end, and you will be liberated to enter the gates of Heaven, to live in glory with Christ forever!
 - **Rom 13:11-14 NLT** - "**..you know how late it is; time is**

*running out. **Wake up**, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. **So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.** Because we belong to the day, **we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.** Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And **don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.**"*

Matt 6:19-21 NLT - "***Don't store up treasures here on earth**, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. **Store your treasures in heaven...**"*

***Reggie Jackson was a baseball player known as "Mr. October."** He got his nickname because he was known to shine when his team played in the postseason playoffs. When Reggie would come up to bat, they knew the ball was going over somebody's fence. Reggie Jackson once said in an interview that he lived for the postseason because he knew that's when he would truly shine. But Reggie Jackson, in order to get to the postseason, had to get to the regular season. His secret to shining in the regular season, was to keep his eye on the postseason. Spiritually, God is looking for some Mr. and Mrs. Octobers - people who are MINDFUL of the shortness of this life, and who have their eyes on fixed on eternity. Christians who choose to live and serve faithfully during the "regular season" of life, because they're looking forward to postseason glory!*

***Once, an American tourist visited a famous Rabbi living in the city.** He was astonished to see that the Rabbi's home was only a single small room, filled with books, with only a small table and a tiny wooden bench. The tourist asked, "Rabbi, where is your furniture?" "Where is yours?" replied the Rabbi. "Mine?" asked the puzzled American. "I'm just a visitor here. I'm only passing through." The Rabbi answered, "So am I."*

Col 3:1-5 NLT - *Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven..Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.."*

IV. In 2017, be *SPIRITUAL* in your walk. - *"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity.."*

- **While in captivity, awaiting their release, they were to be seeking the Lord SPIRITUALLY in worship and intimacy.** They may have been ripped from their homeland, they may not have their animal sacrifices, priesthood, or elaborate rituals anymore, but they still had the **ONE THING** that truly mattered - an invitation for **personal intimate communion with God Almighty!** This was to be their passion; this was to be their focus while in their captivity in Babylon! Though they remained captives **OUTWARDLY**, they could be free **INWARDLY** thru their communion with the Lord!

- **Isn't this the still the answer to OUR "CAPTIVITY" today??** The Lord still desires for His children to **call** upon Him, **seek** Him, **pray** to Him, and **chase** after Him with **ALL** of their hearts...TODAY!!

- **Is that how YOU are with the Lord?? Do YOU love Jesus passionately??**

A man and his friend were playing golf one day, and one of the guys was getting ready to make his chipshot. As he prepared to stroke the ball onto the green, he saw a long funeral procession on the road next to the golf course. The man took off his golf cap, got on his knees, and bowed his head to pray. His friend said "Wow! That's the most thoughtful and touching thing I've ever seen. I can't believe how you were to stop your golf swing, just because of a funeral procession passing by. What thoughtfulness!" The man replied, "Yeah, well, we were married for 35 years. I figured that was the least I could do."

Rev 2:4 - *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that **you have left your first love.**"*

Lk 10:39,42 - *"Mary, who also **sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word...**One thing is needed, and **Mary has chosen that good part,** which will not be taken away from her."*

Acts 13:22 - *"He **raised up for them David as king,** to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found **David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**'"*

In 2017, be **RESPONSIBLE** where you are! *Develop your life, grow you family, contribute to your city!*

In 2017, be **CAREFUL** what you hear! *Stay away from unbiblical and ungodly counsel, whatever form it may take!*

In 2017, be **MINDFUL** how you live! *Knowing this life is very short, keep a light touch on this world, and be living for Heaven aggressively!*

In 2017, be **SPIRITUAL** in your walk! *Press into the Lord, fall in deeper in love with Him, and seek Him with all your heart!*