

LONGING FOR HOME

Jeremiah 29:4–7 (ESV)

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.

Jeremiah 29:10–14 (ESV)

10 “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear 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 I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

“A people in such a position as the Jews in Babylon were in danger in two ways: either to be buoyed up with false hopes, and so to fall into foolish expectations; or, to fall into despair, and have no hope at all, and so become anxious and depressed, who would be unfit for restoration, and unable to play the part which God ordained for them in the history of mankind.”

C. H. Spurgeon

Certainly there was an Eden on this very unhappy earth. We all long for it, and we are constantly glimpsing it: our whole nature at its best and least is corrupted, its gentlest and most humane, it still soaked with the sense of "exile."

J. R. R. Tolkien

1. Jesus gives us Peace in our Exile

Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV)

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Jeremiah is saying don't hate the city, and don't be swallowed by it, but be distinctive in it.

2. Jesus has a Plan in our Exile

“Notice that Jeremiah said God’s plans were good, not easy. Christians usually want life to be easy, but often the good God wants to do can only come through suffering. That is the way it was for Daniel. God’s plans for him were not easy. They included being attacked by his coworkers, persecuted for his faith, and thrown into a den of hungry lions.”

Philip Graham Ryken

“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have sent you.”

3. Jesus is our Hope in Exile

“Jesus lost the city that was so we could become citizens of the city that is to come, and that makes us salt and light in the city that is. Why? If you know who you are, if you have a self, if you have the love of God, then you move out into the earthly city not needing anymore, but ready to give.”

Tim Keller

Jeremiah 31:31–34 (ESV)

The New Covenant

31 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, **32** not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.

33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts...

And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

**What if the hope of gospel is
stronger than the pull of Babylon?**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.