

# “EXILE”

Thriving in Babylon | Week One | Newbreak Church

September 24th, 2023

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

We live in a defining hour of history. The Western world and our country’s moral landscape have changed and are changing faster than we can keep pace. What was once wrong is now right and what was once unacceptable is now celebrated. We are living in a type of “Babylon” and the question is how will we respond? How will we find hope when it seems all is lost?

## Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What’s your favorite article of clothing to wear during the fall? What makes it special?
- What’s the strangest thing that has changed from when you were a child? What has been your favorite change?

## Going Deeper Into the Message

### Read Daniel 1:1–7

#### **Point 1 – Trust God’s process even when it doesn’t make sense.**

We may say we trust God. We may even think we trust God. But when things start to go “wrong” how far does that trust go? When we experience discipline because of other’s actions it’s hard to trust that God has our best in mind. When we are knee deep in hardship and pain it’s easy to falter in our trust in God.

In this first passage of the Book of Daniel, Daniel is showing us how even in the beginning stages of captivity God was taking care of His people. God knew that the king of Babylon was going to conscript some of the Israelites to serve in his presence. God gave them able brains and bodies. God set them up ahead of time to be “well informed” and “quick to understand.” Daniel/Beltshazzar, Hannaniah/Shadrach, Mishael/Meshach and Azariah/Abednego had no idea what was going to happen to them in the king’s service. They didn’t know what was in store for their future. But they did know Yahweh. They did know that He is El Shaddai, God Almighty, and they could trust Him. They could faithfully serve Him in spite of their current circumstances.

Trusting God's process even when it doesn't make sense means we have to take the time to get to know Him. We have to spend time being loved by Him, so that we are secure knowing He's got us. We have to seek the truth of His love for us when all of our circumstances are telling us that He's forgotten about us. Because the truth is, ["For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."](#) Philippians 2:13 NLT

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- When we read Daniel 1:2 we note that it is *God* who hands Israel over to Babylon. How does this change the whole story of Daniel and Israel's captivity in Babylon?
- When it comes to our context living in "Babylon," what are you having a hard time finding God's hand in?
- What do you need to do, or learn, about God to trust His process in your life even in the chaos?

### [Read Jeremiah 29:3–13](#)

#### **Point 2 – Choose to engage rather than retreat.**

In verse 3 we are told that this letter went to Nebuchadnezzar. God's playbook, His plan, was there for everyone to see. He didn't want it to be a secret. What we have to remember about God is that everything is an opportunity for His glory to be made manifest. Yes, He was allowing His people to go into exile. No, it was not fun for them to be removed from their homes, their land, or their temple, but God could still do great things. The power of this great God that the Babylonians thought they had just overcome, could still be made known to a people who did not yet know Him.

God tells His people to take the land. He's saying, "Don't run away from this position I have allowed you to be in." He's encouraging His people to show the world that they don't need to be in the land flowing with milk and honey for God to prosper them. God is the one who cares for His people. It is not *where* they are that brings them prosperity, it is *Whose* they are that brings them prosperity.

Most of us are familiar with Jeremiah 29:11 that says that God has a plan for us, a plan to give us hope and a future. That's all well and good. But if we want a Jeremiah 29:11 life, we need a Jeremiah 29:13 heart. ["You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."](#) Jeremiah 29:13 NIV

Do you want to know the game plan for us? It's seeking the presence and power of God above all else. It's creating spaces and places for an encounter with God. It's realizing that no matter where we are, or who is around us, God can use willing hearts for His glory in the midst of Babylon.

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Why does it matter that we believe we were born for this moment in time?
- For you, personally, what does it look like to “engage” rather than “retreat” in our cultural context?
- How can you seek God more this week with all of your heart?

### —FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

**BONUS:** For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?