

I. REVIEW – DANIEL 10 – GOD’S GRACE FOR DANIEL

- A. Last week we considered how God prepared Daniel to receive a very difficult message (Dan. 10) about the future of Israel and the Gentile nations (Dan. 11-12) much of it yet to be fulfilled.
- B. Daniel had been fasting and praying three weeks (21 days) seeking insight regarding the vision he had been given in Daniel 9 that spoke of the future of Israel and how they would be treated by Gentile nations. Daniel’s prayer regarding the 70 years of exile in Babylon was answered by the angel Gabriel telling Daniel that the kingdom of Israel would be established but not at that time.
- C. Daniel wanted to know two main things: 1) Why such an extensive delay in establishing the kingdom of Israel? When do we get to go home?; 2) Why is God using wicked pagan nations to discipline and train Israel? Why is persecution allowed? What positive result or fruit comes from persecution?
- D. Home – Daniel wanted to know when the exiles would get to go home? Daniel was reading the prophecies of Jeremiah.

⁴ 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: ⁵ Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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...¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. Jeremiah 29: 5-14

- E. Daniel is strengthened against paralyzing fear (that their return home would be delayed) and raging offence (that the fullness of the kingdom age and Son of Man would be delayed) in 4 ways.
 - 1. Daniel was strengthened by fasting and prayer.
 - 2. Daniel was encouraged with divine love – “dearly beloved”
 - 3. Daniel was touched by angelic power.
 - 4. Daniel was empowered with wisdom and understanding from God.

II. 'HOME'

- A. When we think of 'home' we often think of the physical spaces we inhabit that provide safety, security and freedom to be ourselves.
- B. Our sense of home is derived from our relationship with God. God made us for himself, and any time we humans rebel against God's law in our relationship with him we suffer from a deep intense sense of missing "home." We develop this sense of 'exile'.
- C. Adam and Eve were the first exiles, sent out of Eden to face the world exiled from direct access to relationship with God.
- D. When I talk about exile, I am describing that feeling of alienation and longing for something more, no matter where you live.
- E. God disciplined Adam and Eve, the nation of Israel with literal exile in order to restore the truth of relationship with himself in this age. We are exiles in this age as God is not here, but we are to long for the New Jerusalem and God's presence.

III. THE EXILE

- A. The concept of exile in this age is not just an act of discipline for rebellion of God's law. Father God has made our lives here in this age one of an exile. When we receive the work of the cross we become believers of Christ, and participants of a new kingdom.
- B. We long for home for something more and that alienation, that unsettled sense or feeling that there must be a better place than all the human rebellion, brokenness, hurt and pain we humans constantly promote.
- C. Exile is the human condition, and that sense of homelessness is in all of us. This condition of human corruption leads us to our own Babylon which we cannot escape without God.
- D. We are in exile from God. We are bound to this exile of corruption until we bow to Christ.

IV. THIS EARTH IS NOT OUR HOME! 21-DAY FAST OF JAN. 2023 RESETTING OUR SENSE OF HOME!

- A. Paul was given divine understanding regarding the nature of corruption and the impact of being an exile in this wicked age. Paul understood that all attempts to provide for ourselves were futile. Paul made it clear that we all long for home with God.

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Phil. 3:20-21

- B. Peter understood about this exile and our place here on the earth. Peter gives advice similar to Jeremiah's prophecy to the people on their way into exile.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. ¹³ Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 1Peter 2: 9-17

- C. We are invited by the Lord into a 21-day fast that will prepare us for the days ahead. In the future we will look back on this fast as a turning point for this congregation. Jesus is going to battle for Canada and he is starting with his church.
- D. The days ahead will either paralyze us in fear or cause us to rage with offence unless we have God's perspective. He wants to prepare us with an increase of understanding, fresh empowerment from the Holy Spirit and by resetting our sense of divine love (home).
- E. Simply put, our faith will persevere when we are strengthened as Daniel was given strength. Our part is to fast.
- F. And likewise, our faith can fail under the pressures of paralyzing fear and horrifying injustice if not guarded by God's willingness to help us.
- G. Join the fast in some way. If fasting is new, just understand that we can fast in many ways.
 - 1. Caveats:
 - a. At CFG we never ask minors to fast essential nutrition through food. (Candy, sugar, etc)
 - b. If you struggle with an eating disorder, I ask you not to fast unless you have accountability. Spiritual fasting is not about weight loss or body image, but drawing near to God.
 - 2. Daniel Fast: commonly no meat or sweets or what he called "choice foods"
 - a. Reduce your intake volume
 - b. Stay hydrated
 - c. Fast media, or entertainment
 - d. Whatever is in your heart counts before the Lord. Even if you have never fasted you can find something to fast that you participate with us.

