

# ***God's Surprising Plan to Reach Cities***

*Jeremiah 29:1-14*

**Introduction:** God loves the city. God loves our city. God intends that his people provide spiritual influence in cities. But his primary method of reaching cities is not through some big flashy program. Rather, God intends to reach cities as believers exhibit a strong godly presence, thinking and acting like missionaries.

## **1. *A DIFFERENT WAY OF THINKING – To reach cities, God's people must remember their identity. Jeremiah 29:1-4***

- A. The historical background – The exiles were unclear about their purpose. 29:1-3
  - 1. Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem in 605 B.C.
  - 2. Jerusalem falls. The temple is destroyed.
  - 3. Some are killed. Some are left in the rubble. Others are taken captive.
  - 4. The exiles in Babylon are struggling with their identity.
- B. The encouragement from God – They receive a letter from Jeremiah regarding their purpose. 29:4
  - 1. He wants them to think of themselves as missionaries, not victims. *"I have sent..."*
  - 2. He wants them to realize that he is at work even in the worst cities. *"from Jerusalem to Babylon"*
  - 3. He is giving his people a philosophy to embrace during the times of the gentiles.
- C. The point – As Christians we need to maintain the mindset of resident aliens. We have a dual citizenship. We are citizens of heaven, but we are residents of this city.

## **2. *A DIFFERENT WAY OF ACTING – To reach cities, God's people must act with missionary intent. Jeremiah 29:5-9***

- A. First role – Develop an economic presence in the city. 29:5
  - 1. People are going to see your faith as you do your job.
  - 2. You will be able to meet needs with the fruit of your labor.
- B. Second role – Develop a family presence in the city. 29:6
  - 1. God's command is to multiply and not decrease. Reminiscent of Gen. 1:28; 9:1
  - 2. A family presence shows forth the presence of God.
- C. Third role – Develop a civic presence in the city. 29:7a
  - 1. We need to care about the future of our city.
  - 2. We need to work on behalf of the city.
- D. Fourth role – Act with spiritual integrity in the city. 29:7b, 8-9
  - 1. Pray for the city. 29:7b
  - 2. Deal strongly with religious hypocrisy. 29:8-9
- E. Question – Do other passages teach this same concern for cities?
  - 1. Acts 1:8 – The Great Commission is a charge to reach cities.
  - 2. Acts 19:10 and Rev. 2-3 – Paul's missionary strategy was a strategy to reach cities.
- F. Application – The key to acting missionally is attitude. Proverbs 11:10

## **3. *A DIFFERENT OBJECT OF HOPE – God's people must draw courage by remembering their role in the future city. Jeremiah 29:10-14***

- A. The application for Israel: God was going to return them to Jerusalem in 70 years. 29:10-14
- B. The application for us: God is going to give us the New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:2 (1 Cor. 10:6-11)
- C. Our hope: We have a glorious future that transcends the city. 29:11