



EXILE AS OPPORTUNITY DANIEL 1:1-7; JEREMIAH 29:1-7

Understanding Exile

¹In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ²And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. ³Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, (Dan 1:1-3)

Definition: Experienced anxiety from the loss of a structured "world" where treasured symbols of meaning are mocked and dismissed. (Bruggemann)

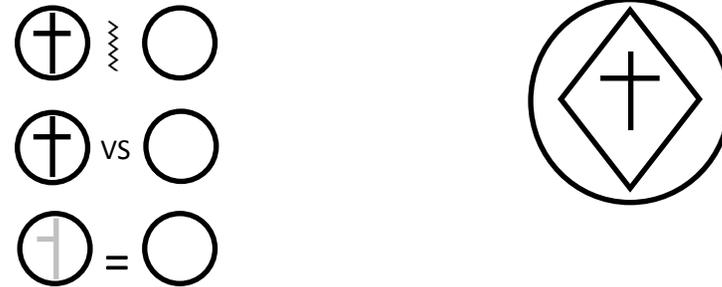
The Dangers of Exile

⁴youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Beltshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. (Dan 1:4-7)

Exile as Opportunity

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. (Jer 29:4-7)

Paradigms



Going Deeper

(For individual or small groups to go deeper with the passage)

- Read Daniel 1:1-7 and consider their experience of entering exile. What did they lose and find? How would exile challenge their faith?
- Can you identify with any of the experiences of "exile" in your life? How? What are some reasons our experience is not a direct parallel with Daniel?
- How would you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the various paradigms of exile? Have you experienced any of these for good or ill?
- Read Jeremiah 29:1-7. What did God call the exiles to do in Babylon? How does this inform your perception of being a Christian in Corvallis?
- Where is God in both Daniel 1:1-7 and Jeremiah 29:1-7? How does this give you hope in your "exile"?

Spiritual Exercise: The word "welfare" (ESV) or "peace" (NIV) is the Hebrew word *שָׁלוֹם* (shalom), which means "wholeness" or "flourishing fullness". Pray for wisdom to find a way you could help bring *שָׁלוֹם* into Corvallis this week and then follow the Spirit's leading in faithful obedience.