

## SESSION 1 NOTES

*Jeremiah 29:4-11*

*Babylonians* — “Move into the city, and lose your spiritual identity.”

*False prophets* — “Don’t move into the city, and keep your spiritual identity.”

*God* — “Move into the city, and keep your spiritual identity.”

Thus, God was calling them to serve and love their new place of residence, rather than resemble it or remove themselves from it. This was because judgment would come upon Babylon if it didn’t repent, and so the Israelites should keep their eyes open, even as they obeyed God’s command here.

This is a radical concept—God’s people should work for the good of those who aren’t living in a right relationship with God. This is consistent with the second greatest commandment and God’s example in John 3:16.

We frequently read of God’s concern for cities—Jerusalem, Babylon, Nineveh, etc. God designed cities for certain purposes:

- places of refuge and safety
- places of justice
- places of culture development
- places of spiritual seeking and finding.

Today, sin has broken cities, so that none of those original purposes are being fulfilled:

- places of racism, classism, and violence
- places to escape from God and His law
- places of pride, arrogance, excess, overwork, and exhaustion
- places of cults and false belief

If we are to seek the “peace and prosperity” of our city, then we need to think about how to restore the city’s original purposes:

- serve and love those who need help and protection
- bring God’s love, peace, and justice to bear on a broken world
- create and cultivate culture
- hold out Christ as the ultimate satisfaction

God cares about people; He is a God of compassion. God loves people, and so He cares about city (Jonah 4:9). So should we.

Work out the gospel in the city, in order to work the gospel in to your own life. This will cause you to either truly believe that the gospel is of sheer grace, or you will give it up altogether. You will perhaps discover that you need the city to spiritually prosper, more than the city needs you.