

# God's Word to Exiles

Jeremiah 29:1-14

# God's Word to Exiles    Introduction

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- Have you ever felt like you were somewhere you didn't quite belong, and yet couldn't see any way you could leave?
- That feeling is a lot like being in exile.

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- At this stage in the book of Jeremiah, the exile to Babylon has begun.
- It happened in stages, various groups being taken captive a bit at a time.

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- Some form of exile or another has been the experience of the majority of Jewish people from that day to this one.
- As Christians, this feeling of “not quite belonging” should also be normal for us.

# God's Word to Exiles

# Introduction

- I. The Recipients 29:1-3
- II. The City 29:4-9
- III. The Future 29:10-14

# I. The Recipients 29:1-3

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- Zedekiah was the final king.
- We can read about him in **Jeremiah 52:1-11**.

## I. The Recipients 29:1-3

- The time frame of **Jeremiah 29** is the reign of Zedekiah.
- Since the exile took place in phases, Jeremiah was still in Jerusalem, but writing to exiles already in Babylon.

# I. The Recipients 29:1-3

- There is a deep sense in which we live as exiles.
- Listen to how the Apostle Peter begins his first letter.

# I. The Recipients 29:1-3

## 1 Peter 1:1-2 (ESV)

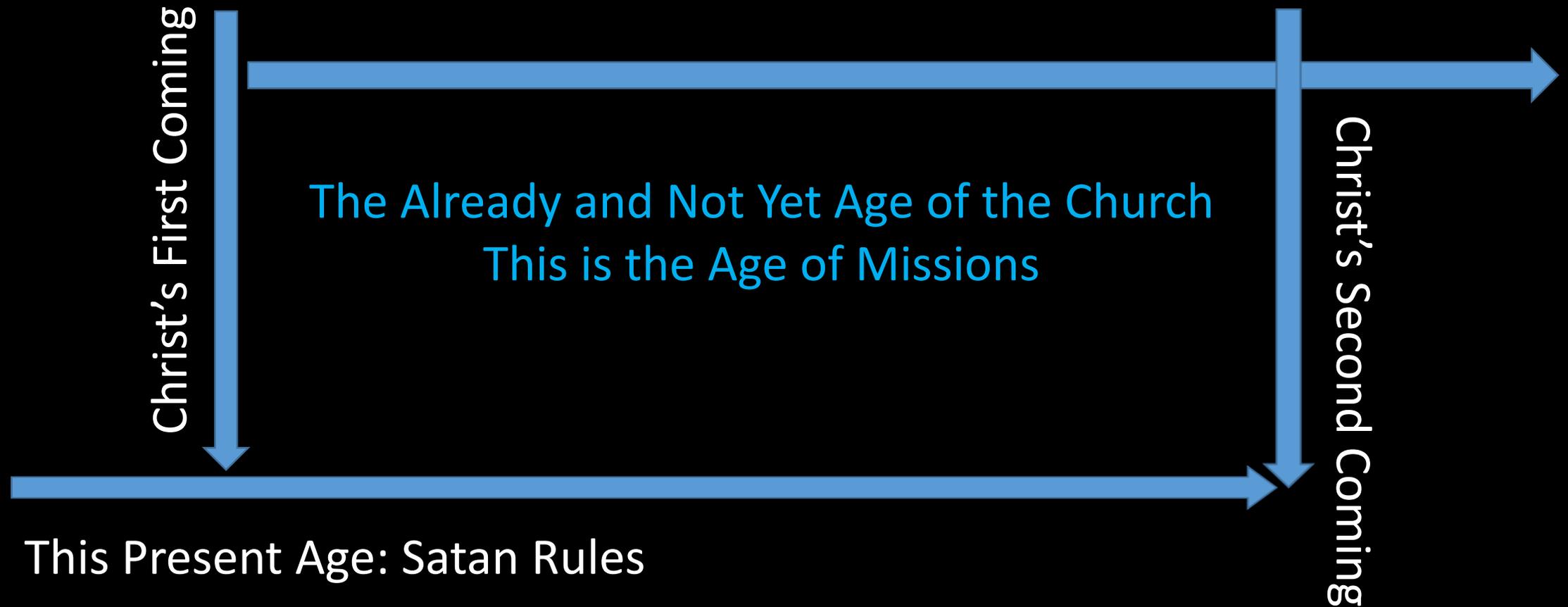
Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,<sup>2</sup> who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

# I. The Recipients 29:1-3

The Age to Come: God Rules through Christ



# I. The Recipients 29:1-3

- One of the deep truths about being an exile is that you are not completely sure where you belong.
- We are “exiles” not because we went somewhere, but because our ruler has not yet returned to take his place.

## II. The City 29:4-9

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- False prophets were telling the people that the time of the exile would be very short.
- One example is the false prophet Hananiah in **Jeremiah 28**.
- Jeremiah disagreed. He encourages the people to settle in and live productive lives.

## II. The City 29:4-9

- There is a grave temptation that can affect us, particularly as Americans – and even more particularly as Hoosiers.
- It is that we need to escape the city to escape “the world” – whatever unsavory and evil influences we find in the city.

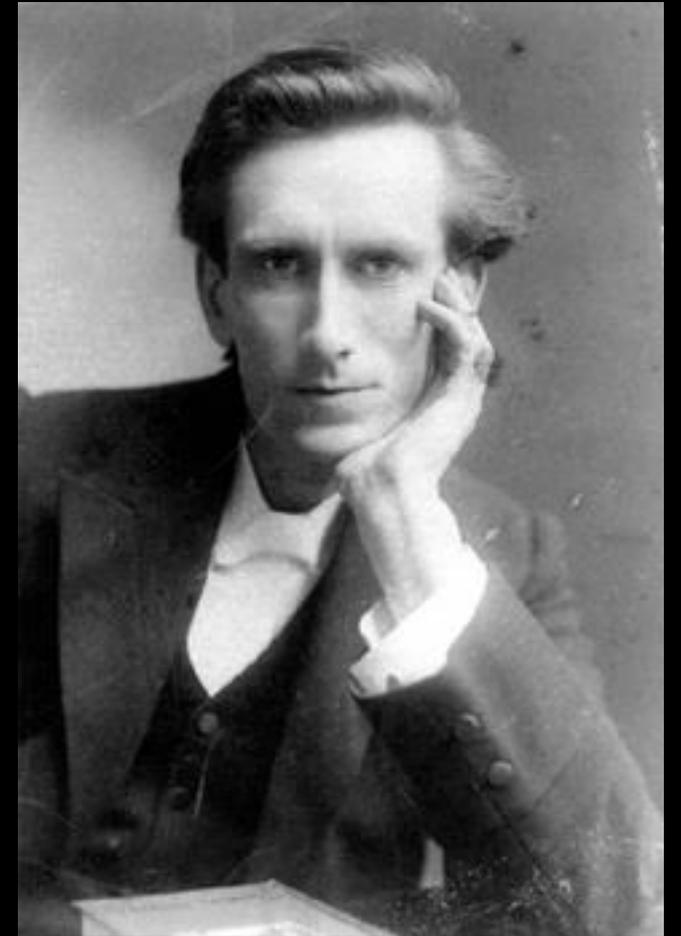
## II. The City 29:4-9

- Jesus reminded us that we need not escape the world at all, let alone the city.
- Oswald Chambers had a keen awareness of this.

## II. The City 29:4-9

*When we become rightly related to God we are loosened from everything around us, and the danger is to imagine we have to get out of the world. Our Lord did not pray that His disciples should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil ...*

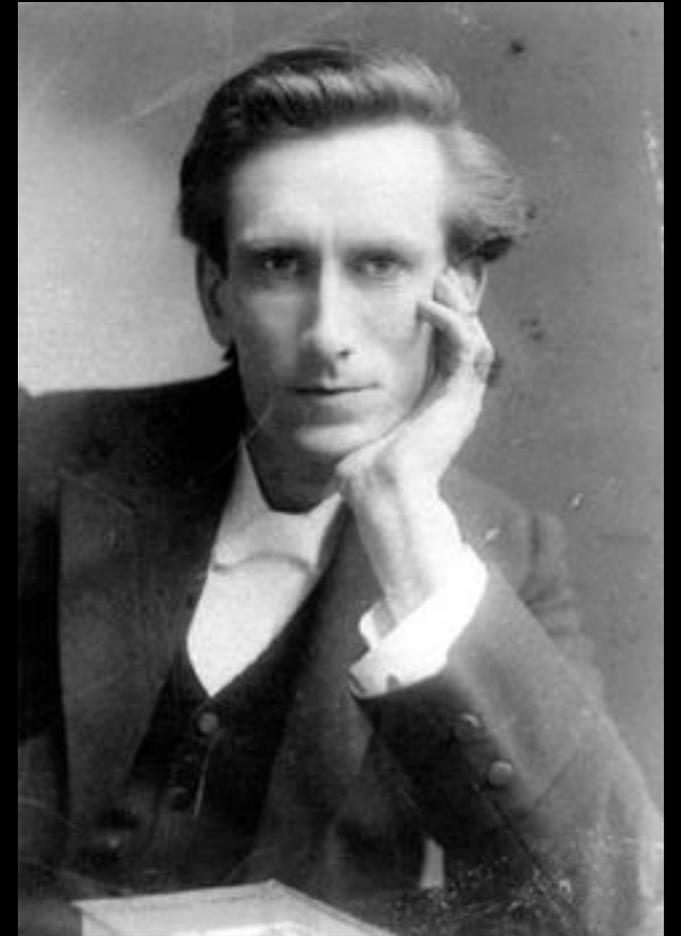
*– Oswald Chambers,  
YMCA Chaplain in Egypt*



## II. The City 29:4-9

*It is nothing but unmitigated cowardice to get out of the world; we have to remain unspotted in the midst of it. "Do you mean to tell me I can live a holy life there?" If you cannot, the grace of God is a fiction. External surroundings make no difference to our inner life, but our inner life makes a telling difference on our surroundings.*

*– Oswald Chambers,  
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## II. The City 29:4-9

- This should be one of the key verses on the heart of anyone involved in a city church.

**Jeremiah 29:7** (ESV)

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.

## II. The City 29:4-9



Downtown Indianapolis at night  
(Flickr/indywriter)

*The gospel must penetrate the city if it is really to penetrate all of society, for the city is the soul of the society. Cities determine the destinies of nations. To remove the cities is to excise the central nervous system of the global society. There is, then, a very practical mandate to serve the city.*

*– David Claerbaut,  
pastor, author, professor*

## II. The City 29:4-9

Four types of people found primarily in cities:

1. The next generation of young people
2. The most unreached peoples who have migrated
3. The culture shapers
4. The poorest of the poor

*(from the Cape Town Commitment of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, 2010)*

## II. The City 29:4-9



*The city is where America is, and America's cities are in deep trouble. As the city goes, so goes the society. From a Christian standpoint, nothing is more important than that the church make a vital contribution to these urban centers.*

*– William E. Pannell,  
Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA*

### III. The Future 29:10-14

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- 29:10 This is the passage that Daniel was reading when he began praying.
- The Lord then sent an angel to give him a special message.

### III. The Future 29:10-14

**Daniel 9:1-3 (NIV)** In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.<sup>3</sup> So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

### III. The Future 29:10-14

- **29:11-13** Verse **11** is often taken by itself as a promise – and it is certainly very encouraging.
- It might be even better when we add verses **12 & 13**.
- That gives us our part as well as God's part.

### III. The Future 29:10-14

- **29:14** This verse is a reminder that the Lord has not yet fulfilled all of his plans for the people of Israel.
- It's safe to say that he has not yet fulfilled all of his plans for you or for me either.

### III. The Future 29:10-14

There are three things this passage reminds us to do:

1. Trust in God's plans.
2. Pray
3. Seek him with all of our heart.

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Conclusions

# God's Word to Exiles      Conclusions

- As Christians, we are not supposed to totally fit in anywhere this side of Christ's return.
- This is a basic reality we need to recognize.

# God's Word to Exiles      Conclusions

## 1 Peter 1:1-2 (ESV)

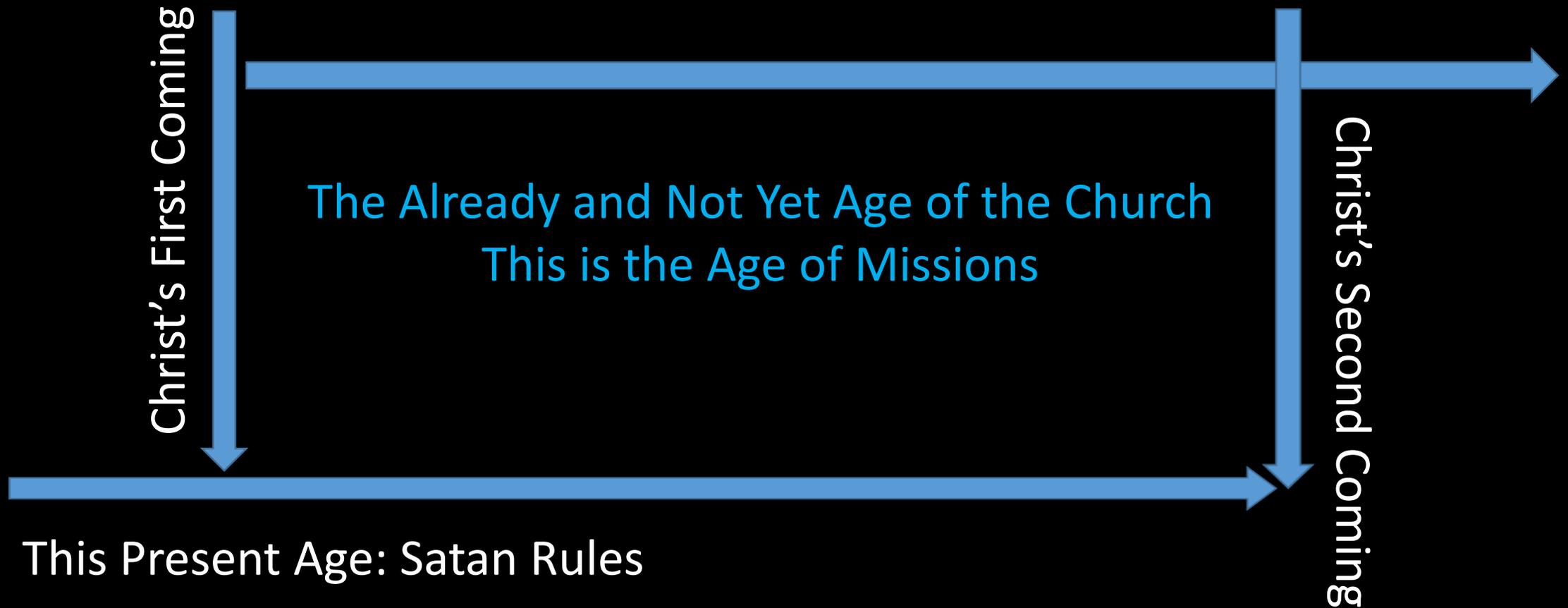
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The Age to Come: God Rules through Christ



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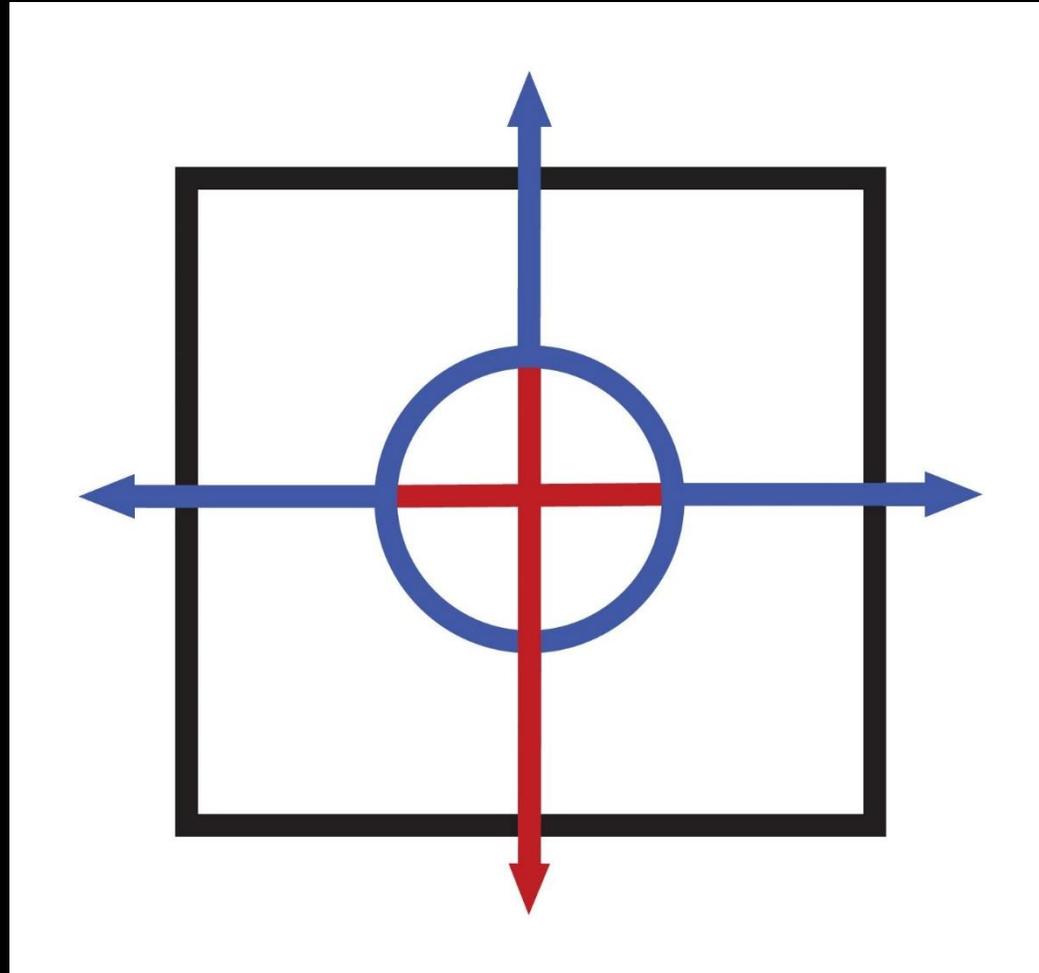
- Secondly, as Christians, we are under orders to seek the good of the city in which we find ourselves.
- To think and do otherwise may be to run away like Jonah from Nineveh.

# God's Word to Exiles      Conclusions



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This passage also reminds us to:

1. Trust in God's plans.
2. Pray
3. Seek him with all of our heart.

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## Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”