

LIFE GROUP LESSON

The Way Home - Week of November 26

Introduction

Home. Do you feel at home where you are today? Or do you dream of a place you can truly call home? Perhaps like many people in the world, you feel displaced, unsettled, like something or *someone* is missing. We live in a fallen world and there are times, when out of nowhere, we are forced to uproot and leave home. Today we look at people who, though displaced, learned that home is where *God is* even if they are in exile. Daniel and his friends were uprooted during the days of Judah's impending fall to the Babylonians. Joseph and Mary were uprooted per Caesar Augustus' decree to enroll the Roman empire in a census for taxation. The coming of God's Christ into the world is "the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands." He will rule over all kingdoms of the world (see Daniel 2:44-45).

Background

The people of Judah experienced exile during the Babylonian invasion of Judah. According to Daniel 1:1-7, 2 Kings 24:1, and 2 Chronicles 36:5-7, it was during the third year of king Jehoiakim's reign in Judah that Nebuchadnezzar first besieged Jerusalem and took back with him some of the most intelligent young men of Judah's nobility, as well as some of the sacred treasures of the LORD's Temple. According to Jeremiah 52:28-30, there were three additional deportations during the seventh, eighteenth, and twenty-third years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Nebuchadnezzar was ruthless. Yet, God used him to bring judgment upon His people for their prolonged, unrepentant idolatry. God then brought judgment on Babylon (Jeremiah 50:1-16).

One night during the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he had disturbing dreams that kept him from sleeping. He demanded his wise men, enchanters, and astrologers not merely explain the meaning, but first tell him the dream. "No one on earth can tell the king his dream! And no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing..." (Daniel 2:10). In fury, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all wise men of Babylon killed. When the commander of the king's guard came to kill Daniel and his three friends (they were part of the wise men of Babylon) Daniel asked about the harsh

decree. Daniel respectfully requested more time. Daniel then went home and urged his three friends to be in prayer and ask God in his great mercy to reveal the mystery of the king's dream. And God did!

Read: Daniel 2:24-45

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

2. What are you going to do about it?

3. How can we help you?

Reflection

The way home begins with trust. Daniel trusted God. Though in exile, Daniel and his three friends refused to be contaminated with the idolatry and darkness of Babylon. And though God gave Daniel the interpretation of the king's dream, Daniel gave all glory to the God in heaven *who reveals mysteries* and whose sovereignty controls all world events. Daniel explained how God wanted Nebuchadnezzar to know his kingdom would come to an end – as with all earthly kingdoms. The Medes and Persians would overtake the Babylonians in 539 BC. Greece would rise to power during the fourth century BC. Rome would occupy the land of Israel during the time when Jesus would be born; had Israel still been a sovereign nation, Joseph (betrothed to Mary) would have been king, since he was of the lineage of king David. Joseph, though born of royal lineage, was not a king but a carpenter from Nazareth during Roman occupation of Israel.

Read: Matthew 1:18-2:6

Throughout Scripture, there seems to be a pattern for God's people – a calling, exile and living as foreigners (God promises to bring home), return. Think about it: Abram; Jacob whose name was changed to *Israel* and his descendants (the exodus); Judeans during the days of Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel and the remnant of Judah; later Joseph and Mary. It was during the Roman occupation of Palestine (represented by 'iron' in the dream of the statue) that Joseph would be called to return home to the city of his

ancestry, Bethlehem. Instructed by the angel to take Mary with him (his betrothed – a virgin yet pregnant with child of the Holy Spirit), Joseph's obedience fulfills Micah 5:2 when Mary gives birth to Messiah in the *city of David*.

Upon Christ's birth, Herod the Great was so disturbed when wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem asking, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews?' – that Herod ordered all baby boys in Bethlehem be killed when the wise men return to their own country by another route. But God protected the holy family. Joseph was warned in a dream to flee for Egypt taking the Child with his mother. After the death of Herod, Joseph was called by God to return; yet upon their return, Joseph was warned in yet another dream not to remain in Judea where Herod's son was ruling, but to continue to the region of Galilee, settling in Nazareth (fulfilling Isaiah 9:1).

In Closing

Though we live in an individualistic culture and profession of faith in Christ is personal, salvation of our LORD is broader than redeemed humanity can fathom. The 'rock cut from the mountain, though not with human hands' is a picture of Christ leaving his home in glory and coming to this earth to establish a Kingdom that will not be destroyed. Are you part of the Kingdom of Christ? Wherever the Lord Jesus Christ is, that is where you want to be – Christ *is* home: "Lord, through all the generations *you* have been our home!" (Psalm 90:1). Today is the day to surrender to Christ and ask the Lord Jesus to make his home in your heart. "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends" (Revelation 3:20). The way home can have detours. Detours are part of living in a fallen world. But God makes our crooked paths straight (Isaiah 40:3-5).

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

November 26: Daniel 2:24-3:30, 1 Peter 4:7-5:14, Psalm 119:81-96, Prov. 28:15-16
November 27: Daniel 4:1-37, 2 Peter 1:1-21, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 28:17-18
November 28: Daniel 5:1-31, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Psalm 119:113-128, Prov. 28:19-20
November 29: Daniel 6:1-28, 2 Peter 3:1-18, Psalm 119:129-152, Prov. 28:21-22
November 30: Daniel 7:1-28, 1 John 1:1-10, Psalm 119:153-176, Proverbs 28:23-24
December 1: Daniel 8:1-27, 1 John 2:1-17, Psalm 120:1-7, Proverbs 28:25-26
December 2: Daniel 9:1-11:1, 1 John 2:18-3:6, Psalm 121:1-8, Proverbs 28:27-28

The Way Home

**Text: Daniel 2: 1-6, Matthew 21:42-44,
Isaiah 9:6-7, Matthew 1:18-25**

**1 - THE WAY _____ BEGINS WITH
_____.**

**2 - THE WAY _____ CAN HAVE
_____.**

**PLAIN TRUTH
HOME—JESUS IS BOTH _____
AND _____.**

November 26, 2023