

Jeremiah 29:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

Analysis

God commands the exiles not merely to survive but to multiply—to take wives, have children, and arrange marriages for those children. This is covenant language echoing God's creation mandate to 'be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1:28) and His promise to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5). Even in exile, even under judgment, God's people are to embrace life, grow families, and continue the covenant line.

This command directly opposed the logic of despair. Why marry and have children if we're prisoners in a foreign land? Why bring children into suffering? Yet God commands it because His purposes continue even through judgment. The future hope of restoration required a next generation to carry it forward. Those who obeyed this command became the parents and grandparents of the generation that returned under Cyrus—Daniel, Ezekiel, Esther, Mordecai, Ezra, and Nehemiah were all products of the exilic community.

This teaching has profound implications for Christian living. We do not put life on hold waiting for Christ's return. We marry, raise children, plan for the future—not because we're earthly-minded but because faithful presence requires full engagement with our present context. The early church expected Christ's imminent return yet still organized communities, appointed elders, wrote letters

for future generations, and commanded believers to marry and raise children (1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3).

Historical Context

The instruction to arrange marriages for children 'that they may bear sons and daughters' ensured the Jewish community would continue. Ezra and Nehemiah later addressed the problem of intermarriage with pagans (Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 13:23-27), showing both the challenge and the importance of maintaining covenant identity through marriage. The exilic community that followed Jeremiah's instructions preserved Jewish faith and identity, making the return possible.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this command to multiply and arrange marriages demonstrate faith in God's future purposes despite present difficulties?
2. What does it mean to embrace life fully—marriage, children, future planning—while living as exiles awaiting our true home?
3. In what ways might despair or end-times speculation tempt us to disengage from ordinary life rather than faithfully living in the present?

Genesis 9:7 (Parallel theme): And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

Judges 14:2 (Parallel theme): And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

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