

Jeremiah 29:11 Expository Notes

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'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

This verse is probably one of the most quoted verses apart from John 3:16 and one of the most misunderstood and taken out of context verses as well. It usually comes as quite a surprise and shock to those who use this Scripture as a "proof text" for the charismatic wealth and prosperity gospel (which is no gospel at all) only to find out the opposite meaning is the true meaning and intent of God. This is a classic example of what it means to take Scripture out of context. It is also ironic that chapter 29 of Jeremiah is a warning to all the false prophets who preach a message of that is contrary to the true message of God. This section is also a message to many religious leaders of today who distort and misrepresent the truth of God, for such deception will not go unnoticed or un-punished by God.

Let's take a look at this in context and see what the clear meaning of God is in this passage of Jeremiah the prophet. If you have a bible handy, please get it out and read the passages for yourself as we glean God's true meaning here.

God put His chosen people into captivity by the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as a means to chasten and correct His wayward children. God is telling His children in captivity that they are to **remain in exile in Babylon for an additional 70 years** (verse 10) before God brings them back to Jerusalem. Those who are in Jerusalem will suffer through wars, famines, pestilence and terror. (Verses 15-18)

Because God is not going to release Israel from captivity any time soon, they should make themselves comfortable in Babylon by building houses, farming the land; settle in and marry, bear children and raise families so their population will increase in the land of Babylon. God's people Israel are commanded to pray for the peace and prosperity of Babylon, for as goes the welfare and good fortune of Babylon, so goes their own welfare and prosperity as well. (Verses 4-7)

God is sternly warning His children to not give heed to the false prophets and diviners in their midst who are falsely prophesying to them good news of impending freedom from captivity. Those false prophets speak their own words and do not speak the words of God. (Verses 8-9, 15-19)

Now the context of verse 11-14 is though God will continue to chasten them for the next 70 years, they should not despair for God is reminding them that there is a future for them and a hope once the 70 years of captivity, war, famine and pestilence is complete. God will give reward to Israel, not the expectations of their fears, or the expectations of their fancies, but the expectations of their faith. This verse is to give His children comfort during this time of great chastening. They are to focus their faith and trust upon the future promise of God and not their current situation.