

## Survey of the Bible **Jeremiah 29 - 38**

Last time we saw how Jeremiah had prophesied against Judah and how the Lord would judge them by bringing those nations to the north against them to take them into captivity.

**Jeremiah 1:14-16** <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. <sup>15</sup> "For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares the LORD; "and they will come and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah. <sup>16</sup> "I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.

And of course we know from history between the years of 609 BC to 597 BC that this did in fact take place as the Babylonians came and plundered Jerusalem and took many into captivity back to Babylon.

But before God would accomplish such a thing His faithful word would hold true until His timetable would be established. And part of that faithful word included His promise to bring judgment on the people who had abandoned the one true God in favor of false gods.

And yet in that judgment God would hold out the hope that He would not abandon those who would be His remnant. But simply because this hope existed did not mean that their judgment would not stand fast. But even in the judgment there was hope that it would not be forever.

**Jeremiah 29:1,4-14** <sup>NAU</sup> Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. <sup>4</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, <sup>5</sup> 'Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup> 'Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply

there and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> '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 have welfare.' <sup>8</sup> "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. <sup>9</sup> 'For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD. <sup>10</sup> "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> '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. <sup>12</sup> 'Then you will call upon 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 search for Me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> 'I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'

**In verses 4-7 what essentially is God telling the captives of Judah?**

Carry on with your lives despite the situation in which you find yourselves. In fact, the Lord tells them to seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you.

Now the word welfare in that context has nothing to do with the welfare we often associate with exiles from other lands that find themselves upon our soil, often illegally. The welfare they receive is a welfare you and I pay for as they enjoy the benefits thereof.

The welfare in our text can also be translate peace. In fact, both the NIV and NKJV understands this portion of God's word in just that way.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Jeremiah 29:7** Also, *seek the peace and prosperity* of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Jeremiah 29:7** And *seek the peace of the city* where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.

God has placed these people in a foreign land where the native peoples worship other gods and do not acknowledge the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, at least not at this time.

**And yet in the midst of a pagan environment what does God tell the captives?**

Essentially, live in the midst of these people in peace and build your families and seek your fortunes as you work hard in that land in which I place you.

But God adds something that should not be overlooked.

**What does He say at the end of verse 7?**

Pray for the city in which you live.

**Why would God have these people pray for pagans and their government, which is what is implied in the phrase, “seek the peace of the “city” where I have caused you to be carried away captive?”**

Because as the peace of the city advances, so does the peace of the people in that city in which they live. And here the phrase, “peace or welfare of the city,” includes such things as prosperity in the crops they grow, the labors of their hands and advancement of their families.

In other words, as goes the peace and prosperity of the city to which God blesses for the sake of the captives, so goes the peace and prosperity of the captives.

By the way, there is something to be learned here about we who are strangers and aliens in a land that is not our home.

**How might this instruction from God to these captives apply to us as believers?**

This by the way is precisely what Jesus Christ Himself confirms when He prays for His people in the midst of being in a pagan world.

**John 17:5-10** <sup>5</sup> "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. <sup>6</sup> "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; <sup>8</sup> for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and

truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. <sup>9</sup> "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; <sup>10</sup> and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

**John 17:15-20** <sup>15</sup> "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. <sup>16</sup> "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. <sup>20</sup> "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

**What is inferred by Jesus when He asks the Father not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one?**

That as they live in the world God Himself will be their protector, guide and provider.

This is what we see in Jer. 29:7 as the captives are to pray to God on behalf of the city in which they live.

But this doesn't change the fact that they are bound to live in a foreign land. In fact, God Himself tells them how long it will be they must live there.

**Jeremiah 29:8-13** <sup>8</sup> "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. <sup>9</sup> 'For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD. <sup>10</sup> "For thus says the LORD, '***When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.*** <sup>11</sup> '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. <sup>12</sup> 'Then you will call upon 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 search for Me with all your heart.

By the way, what we see in verses 8 and 9 is that the religious aspect of the lives of the captives continues to be in place with religious leaders still in place.

**But what does God warn about these leaders?**

‘Don’t listen to their babblings about when you’ll be released from captivity as if they have inside information. They have nothing because I have given them nothing. In fact, your time in Babylon will be a precise time that I set, so don’t listen to them as to the times of your release.’

But, despite a time of almost two generations, 70 years, the hope is that it will finally be completed according to God’s plan and a remnant will go back to Jerusalem.

And here is what God tells the captives.

**Jeremiah 30:7-10** <sup>7</sup> 'Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it. <sup>8</sup> 'It shall come about on that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves. <sup>9</sup> 'But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. <sup>10</sup> 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant,' declares the LORD, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar And your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, And no one will make him afraid.

Here God speaks of a future deliverance for the captives in light of their slavery. And notice what is said in verse 8. This is the promise of deliverance.

But then notice what follows this deliverance in verse 9.

**Jeremiah 30:9** <sup>9</sup> 'But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

This may seem like an odd statement because David their king has been dead for centuries.

**What does it mean then that they will serve their God and David their king whom God will raise up for them?**

Though this prophecy certainly underscores how God will bring a remnant back to the physical land in Jerusalem this same prophecy is looking much further down the road to the true remnant, those of the seed of Abraham who will come under the rule of David’s seed.

**Matthew 1:1** <sup>NAU</sup> The record of the genealogy of *Jesus the Messiah, the son of David*, the son of Abraham:

**Acts 2:29-36** <sup>29</sup> "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, <sup>31</sup> he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. <sup>32</sup> "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup> "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. <sup>34</sup> "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, <sup>35</sup> UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" <sup>36</sup> "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified."

**Acts 13:32-39** <sup>32</sup> "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, <sup>33</sup> that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.' <sup>34</sup> "As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE  *blessings* OF DAVID.' <sup>35</sup> "Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*, 'YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.' <sup>36</sup> "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; <sup>37</sup> but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. <sup>38</sup> "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup> and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

**Revelation 22:16** <sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*"

When Jeremiah addresses David their king, despite the fact that David has been dead for over 400 years, he assumes the captives understand the promise regarding David that one greater than

David would sit on David's throne which is eternal in nature, not temporal.

And so again, his prophecy has more than one meaning as it includes a temporal fulfillment in bringing a remnant of Jews back to the land, but more importantly the ultimate fulfillment in the people of God, both Jew and Gentile, who surround the throne of God with David, that is the root and descendant of David, sitting on that throne.

The entire 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of Jeremiah describes this return of the exiles in Babylon back to the land of their fathers. And this of course happened, but the bigger picture remains what this return and the land actually is in the bigger scheme of things as God has brought His people into the land of promise.

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** <sup>31</sup> "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

To suggest that the nation of Israel has ever fallen into this category of embracing this new covenant that Jeremiah speaks of is to miss the point of who Israel is and how all Israel will be saved.

**Who are the people whose hearts God has placed His law into and who know the Lord and whose iniquities and sins God no longer remembers?**

All of the remnant out of the world whom God has chosen to be His people and who have trusted in the son of David who ratified that new covenant with His own blood and resurrection from the dead, who rules and reigns at the right hand of the Father, and who will one day return to the Kingdom that is eternal and in which righteousness dwells.

Chapters 32 and 33 speak of the removing of the people from Jerusalem but continues to hold out the promise of a return to the land.

But again, this is a repeat of a promise that has two fulfillments; one temporal and one eternal.

The temporal involves taking a remnant back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the eternal which demonstrates how that temporal blessing is a mere shadow of what is to come as the final fulfillment of God's promise to bring His people back into the land of promise.

**Jeremiah 33:14-16** <sup>14</sup> 'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> 'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. <sup>16</sup> 'In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is *the name* by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.'

There is only one Israel who claims that name and that is the Israel of God that Paul speaks of which includes all people everywhere, both Jew and Gentile, who name the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapters 37 and 38 we have the account of Jeremiah being arrested and held by the authorities in Judah because they thought he was going to defect to the Chaldeans. In chapter 38 he is rescued.

**Jeremiah 38:6-10** <sup>6</sup> Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern *of* Malchijah the king's son, which was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud. <sup>7</sup> But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, while he was in the king's palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Now the king was sitting in the Gate of Benjamin; <sup>8</sup> and Ebed-melech went out from the king's palace and spoke to the king, saying, <sup>9</sup> "My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet whom they have cast into the cistern; and he will die right where he is because of the famine, for there is no more bread in the city." <sup>10</sup> Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take thirty men



from here under your authority and bring up Jeremiah the prophet from the cistern before he dies."

Chapter 39 begins with the fall of Jerusalem and we'll pick up here next time.