

My Plans for You In an Alien World

Jeremiah 29.1-19

Key Verse: *“For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”* v11

This verse came in a prophetic letter to Judah who were in exile in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar as judgment for their continued rejection of the Lord and His ways. It was therefore a time of change and uncertainty for the Jewish people and the message was one of hope and consolation for all who would hear and heed. This verse also comes to us in a day of uncertainty as we see the standards of Christian community and citizenship torn apart by men who know not the Lord, when international politics are ever more chaotic and unpredictable, and when the safety and sanctity we could once take for granted is rapidly evaporating.

How does it reach you today? Are you under threat socially? Is living as a Christian almost impossible? Have interpersonal relationships fallen apart? Do you live in fear of neighbours and a violent wider society? Are you severely pressured by unshakeable doubts? Is your workplace a nightmare? Child of God, take heart! This is the verse for you. Can we today take a verse from Jeremiah and apply it to our needs today? Provided we read God's word correctly, we can. Look up 2 Corinthians 1.20 and take heart. This is His word to you.

We like captive Judah are to live for Him in the Land where God has placed us. See vv4-7.

They were to live their everyday lives amongst these people knowing that they were there by the appointment of God. *‘... the exiles whom I have sent into exile ...’* Are there because God wants you there? Then He is working out His purposes through you in that place; therefore live for Him. Is your workshop bench often tedious, your office desk often meaningless, or the children in your care driving you to distraction? Look for the reason of God's appointment to that place. Look up Colossians 3.16&17, also 1 Peter 2.13-17. Serve Him in your task with a happy spirit, and let Him turn it to good account for the Kingdom.

They were to seek and pray for the welfare of the country which had accepted them.v7. Also see 1 Timothy 2.1-4, and Psalm 122.6-9. We as God's people have a duty of care to the people among whom we live. We

ought to obey these verses and work to see them fulfilled in our day, and in our communities.

We like Judah face perils along the way. See v7 & 8-10.

First they were to seek the place of safety in a Godless land v7. They were not to stir up trouble. See Romans 12.17-21, Hebrews 12.14, James 3.17&18 and 1 Peter 3.10&11. Some Christians are always looking for a fight, but the fruit of the Spirit is . . . See Galatians 5.22&23. We need to see those who are far from the Kingdom more as the victims than the enemy. Mostly they need our friendship and care rather than our criticism. To live for the Lord in a hostile world needs all the wisdom and grace which the fulness of the Holy Spirit can bestow. *He (the Lord) is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.* 1 Corinthians 1.30.

Then they were to hold true to the faith God had given them. v8-10 In these days the perils of false teaching are greater than for physical threats. See 2 Peter 2.1&2, Colossians 2.8, Ephesians 4.14 and 2 Timothy 4.3&4. Today false sects abound, pretending to be religious or even Christian, or claiming to be another or the only pathway to heaven, whilst the narrow way of the Lord is maligned and brought into disrepute. Your only answer to this danger is for you to know your Bible. Read it, study it, meditate in its words. Make it part of your life every day. See 2 Timothy 3.15&16.

We like Judah look for a better day in the Land God has reserved for us v10.

For Judah this was to be their restoration to their land. But our inheritance is in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1.3-14 and 1 Peter 1.3-5.

This know; this world is not our home, we are just passing through , Hebrews 13.14, Philippians 3.20.

Therefore we are look for the land that is brighter than day, whether it be by death Philippians 1.23&24, or by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when we will be gathered into His kingdom 1 Thessalonians 1.9-10

Let us therefore, live in the light of that certainty. See Colossians 3.4, Hebrews 9.28, 1 John 2.28-3.3.

Read the key verse again. Take heart. God has a plan for you, even in your hour of need.

We like Judah have a God who hears and answers our prayers. v12-14

Daniel was one of those exiles to whom Jeremiah's sent his letter. We know him as a man of prayer in the book that bears his name. See for example, Daniel 2, especially verse 14 to 23, and Daniel 9.1-3.

If God loves to answer the prayers of His people, why is it that we are so reluctant to come to Him in prayer? You already know Luke 11.9, but read it again and be encouraged to engage more often in prayer.

We like Judah will find adversity to be a blessing, if it restores our relationship with God. v14. Also look up 1 Peter 1.3-9.

Do you wonder at what God is doing in your life? Do you smart under the restrictions and the limitations that He has placed upon you? We sometimes think that if the Christian is His child whom He loves, then everything should go well. However do we not then forget the Lord, become self sufficient, lacking in zeal and compassion for those who are lost? It is under testing that we turn back to God and renew our relationship with Him. It is when we are in trouble that we cry out to Him and we are filled with glory as we see Him answer our prayers.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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