

Pastor's Pen

Not Our Promise!

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." — Jeremiah 29:11

This verse is often quoted during a trial to encourage or inspire. Incorrectly interpreting this passage to mean that God has specific plans to help us prosper, so don't worry. However, in context, this verse deals with a particular promise God gave Israel. That promise points to the end of their Babylonian exile in specific terms, 70 years (verse 10). So, the word prosper doesn't refer to money or material blessings but physical and spiritual salvation.

So the question is, who is this verse about? So first, let's put that verse back into its context. Jeremiah 29:1. "These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon."

This verse alone, 29:1, gives us enough clues to realize that this passage is not about us. This is not God giving us a promise. God told Jeremiah to send this letter to the exiles in Babylon. Simply put, we don't qualify, that is, unless you are a 3000-year-old Jew exiled to Babylon. If not, you don't qualify, but let's keep looking at the context to see if this is backed up in the text.

Jeremiah 29:2-4 "This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah, the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah, the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah, sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It said: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,"

The promise found in verse 11 describes a specific time in history. It gives very specific names and events. To say that this promise is for us is to miss the context of this passage altogether. But, someone might say, God still wants us to prosper, right? Well, in terms of salvation, yes. In fact, this passage is a great reminder of the fulfilled prophecy and the perfect Word of God.

This amazing story points us to a more excellent release and redemption for all of God's people. So, taking away our specific, individually focused application doesn't subtract the awesomeness from this passage. It enhances it and reminds us of the collective salvation of God's people in history and in the future, still to come.

Your shepherd,
Pastor Mark

Quote of the Week

"Since no man is excluded from calling upon God the gate of salvation is open to all. There is nothing else to hinder us from entering, but our own unbelief."
- John Calvin

Grace Gems

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE
- Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

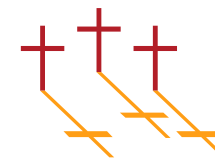
"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
1 John 1:3

The Christian experience is a definite and a certain experience-- "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." Now if people do not know what they have, how can they wish for others to share it with them? So that is the starting point" that the Christian experience is not a vague one; it is not indefinite or uncertain. Rather, it is a well-defined experience, and true Christians know what they have; they are aware of what they possess. They are in no uncertainty themselves as to what has happened to them as to their personal position. "These things write we unto you," says John, "that your joy may be full"--that you may share what we have. You cannot invite someone to share something with you unless you know exactly what you are asking him to share.

We are dealing with what may be called the great New Testament doctrine of the assurance of salvation, which has been subjected to considerable criticism. People have regarded it as presumption. They have said this is something that is impossible, and that no one should be able to claim such a thing.

But John is a man who tells us that he knows, and it is because he knows and because of what he has experienced that he is writing. Christians are not men and women who are hoping for salvation, but those who have experienced it. They have it; there is no uncertainty. They "know whom [they] have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12); and it is because John has possessed this that he writes about it.

A Thought to Ponder
Christians are not men and women who are hoping for salvation, but those who have experienced it.



Weekly Gatherings

Bible Classes

Old & New Testament Classes
Ladies Class
Young Adults Young Parents
Youth Surge
Sunday Morning @ 9:30AM

Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM
Men's Bible Study
1st and 3rd Saturday
Women of Grace | 9AM

Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM
every other week @ Chambers, Cox's,
Patrick's, Brown's and Royall's

Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team
and forgot to sign up, please contact the
team leader at the appropriate email
address.

Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM
Youth Study and AWANA!

Service Times

Sunday Services 8AM & 11:00AM
Sunday School 9:30AM
Children's Church @11:00AM

Giving from service on 05/07/2023

General Offering	12,820.48
Building Fund	6,209.00
Uganda	25.00
Uganda Mission Trip	522.00
Total.....	\$19,576.48
Attendance	236
Online.....	30

Uganda Mission Trip Amount Needed.\$12,750.00
Uganda Mission Trip Collected...\$11,257.00

Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
Maintenance-maintenance @ghbcva.org
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org
Security-security@ghbcva.org



Grace Harvest
Baptist Church
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ghbcva.org | 804.561.3742
9821 South Redfield Drive, Amelia, VA 23002

Grace Harvest Baptist Church

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Welcome