

Jeremiah 29

4-16-98

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Last time week looked at the **Yoke** Sermon! (28:13)
- 1.2. The 1st **deportation** of the Jews has taken place(597bc) so Jeremiah writes to **enlighten, encourage & exhort** them.
- 1.3. **There are 4 Letters in ch.29:** [1] From Jeremiah to the Exiles.
[2] Jeremiah's response to the false prophets in Babylon.
[3] From Shemaiah to their temple priests concerning Jeremiah.
[4] From Jeremiah to the exiles concerning Shemaiah.
- 1.4. **Correspondence** wasn't difficult in those days because there were regular diplomatic missions between Jerusalem & Babylon.
 - 1.4.1. Also, Jeremiah had "friends in high places"! (3)

2. **LETTER #1 TO THE JEWISH CAPTIVES!** (1-14)

- 2.1. **INTRO:** (1-3)
- 2.2. **Q:** With the Jews, what would be some of their problems living in a gentile land?
 - 2.2.1. No temple; out of the land{blessings}; feast days; sacrificing.
 - 2.2.2. With their special laws of "clean & unclean" they'd have a difficult time adjusting to a pagan society.
- 2.3. **Q:** What had they lost?
 - 2.3.1. Everything but their lives & what few possessions they could carry w/them.
 - 2.3.2. They lost their **freedom** which they were very proud of!
 - 2.3.2.1. **Jn.8:31-33** "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, **and have never been in bondage to anyone.** How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"

- 2.3.3. They lost their ability to **make a living**. - Were **separated** from relatives & friends. - It's probable **some died** because of the long walk.
- 2.4. No matter how they looked at their situation it looked **hopeless!**
- 2.5. **Here's, "How to make the best of a difficult situation!"**
- 2.6. **#1 ACCEPT IT! (4-7)**
- 2.7. Though things looked bleak, Jeremiah calls for them to be a **good witness** to the idolatrous Babylonians, & **good Jews** though separated from their Temple & its services!
- 2.8. Like they used to say in Israel, "*There is no use crying over spilt milk & honey!*"
- 2.8.1. **See it as from God! (4)**
- 2.8.1.1. Don't miss this starting point, "I have caused" (4,7)
- 2.8.1.2. God sent it – Accept it! ("**Resist the authorities, you resist God!**" Rom.13:2)
- 2.8.1.3. *Accept it from the hand of God & let God have His way!*
- 2.8.1.4. It does no good to hang your harp on the willow tree, & sit around & weep! (Ps.137:1-6)
- 2.8.1.5. Turn **Tragedy to Triumph** by accepting the situation courageously, & put yourself in the hands of a **loving God** who makes **no mistakes!** (www)
- 2.8.2. **Live as normal as you can! (5,6)**
- 2.8.2.1. You can do this by "**overcoming evil w/good!**" **Rom.12:21**.
- 2.8.2.2. **Titus 2:9,10** "Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."
- 2.8.2.3. **Q:** Do you think young couples were wanting to get pregnant...start a family?
- 2.8.2.3.1. But if they didn't Israel would be soon to be extinct before they returned in 70 years! (They hold in their hand "the remnant" the future for God's salvation!) "**Be fruitful multiply!**"

2.8.3. **Be a Blessing to others! (7)**2.8.3.1. **Pursue Peace** – Be a peacemaker not a troublemaker!2.8.3.1.1. **Peace** = Shalom/their whole welfare.

2.8.3.1.2. “For in its shalom you will have shalom!”

2.8.3.1.3. Or, “your shalom is bound up in its(the city/Bab.) shalom!”

2.8.3.2. **Pursue Prayer** – Pray for Babylon???2.8.3.2.1. **No**, Israel remembers, “Pray for the peace of **Jerusalem**: “May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.”(Ps.122:6,7); “Peace be upon **Israel!**” (Ps.125:5).2.8.3.2.2. **But pray for our enemy? 1 Tim.2:1-4** “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2.8.3.2.2.1. They were sure easier to hate I bet they said!

2.8.3.3. We are just like them: [1] We are far away from home [2] We live among those who do not accept our world view & way of life. - “Seeking the peace of the city” is great advice for us today!

2.8.3.3.1. **1 Pet.2:11,12** “Beloved, I beg you as **sojourners and pilgrims**, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”2.8.3.4. **Q:** Do we seek **peace**/shalom & do we **pray** for our cities?

Our employer’s? For those in authority over us?

2.9. **Now, Here’s “How NOT to make the best of a difficult situation!”**2.10. **#2 AVOID FALSE HOPES!** (8,9)

2.11. Don’t listen to lies!

2.11.1. These lies were in the last chapter(vs.3,11) about returning in only 2 years! Therefore no reason to settle down here!

2.11.1.1. Here’s Positive Thinking at its finest again!

2.11.1.2. Jer. tells them the opposite...70 years, settle down there.

2.11.1.3. **To meddle w/false hopes is to miss what God has planned for you!**

- 2.12. It seems to be very human(yet sin) to indulge in **false hopes** & grasp at every straw!
- 2.12.1. Did you see **Lotto** a week ago? Their computers jammed as the reward grew to over 100 million! People getting violent over getting a chance at winning it big...what a **false hope**!
- 2.12.2. **New Diet Fads** are sure to make millions each time they come out if you sell it right!
- 2.12.3. **New Get Rich schemes** on the cable channels all hold out false hope! {It is like trying to scoop up water with a colander.}
- 2.12.4. This approach leads to **Despair, Depression, Hopelessness, Discouragement, & the paralysis of self pity!**
- 2.12.4.1. Allow the word of God to direct you instead!
- 2.13. **#3 BE PATIENT!** (10)
- 2.14. “**70 years**” – [1] Remember God has His timing all worked out [2] He knows how long & how much [3] & His plans never fail!
- 2.15. “**my good word**” - True help is based on the revealed word of God, ...not from dreams of self appointed prophets!
- 2.15.1. “Better to be in the **brink in Babylon in** the will of God, then sunning on the Mediterranean, **out** of His will!”
- 2.16. **Chastening** helps us to: confess our sins, draw near to him, keeps us from valuing the world too highly, & teaches us the importance of every moment of time!
- 2.17. **#4 TRUST GOD!** (11-14)
- 2.18. Here is a powerful promise when **you're** in “exile”(1 living away from their native country)!
- 2.19. The original reads: “For I know the **purposes** which I am **planning** for you, says Jehovah, **purposes** for peace not for evil, to give you a future & a hope.”
- 2.20. [1] God is **Thinking** about you!

- 2.21. [2] God has thoughts of **Peace for you!**
- 2.21.1. His plans are for your **Peace** not evil, so don't fear the future.
- 2.21.2. **Evil** –(ie)these sufferings in a foreign land is chastening not abuse.
- 2.22. God has a **Purpose for you!** – so let Him work out your will!
- 2.22.1. Never waste your trials by resisting God!
- 2.23. [3] God has a **Future** for you! – A design.
- 2.23.1. Though their redemption would be a long process(70 yrs.) Don't think I forgot about you!
- 2.24. [4] God holds out a **Hope** to you! – Don't give up!!!
- 2.25. **Vs.12,13** - This all can only be realized if 12 & 13 follow!
- 2.26. **Vs.14** – These promises reach beyond the captivity, to all Jews throughout the world, when 1 day Israel will be regatherd to meet their Messiah.

3. **LETTER #2 TO THE JEWISH CAPTIVES! (15-23)**

- 3.1. False prophets in Babylon were giving false hopes because of a false perception!
- 3.1.1. Yes, Zedekiah was still on the throne. Yes, there were still Jew's living in the land. But, this was no guarantee that the city & nation would be delivered!
- 3.1.1.1. The people still in the land were "**bad figs**" that would be thrown out. (17, also 24:3)
- 3.1.2. Jeremiah names names! 2 false prophets: Ahab & Zedekiah.
- 3.1.2.1. These 2 preached **lies**(21), & lived **godless lives**(23).
- 3.1.2.2. So, he anounced their doom in Babylon.
- 3.1.2.3. Their names would become **proverbs** in Israel, a warning not to rebel against the word of God.(22)

4. **LETTER #3 TO SHAMAIAH! (24-28)**

- 4.1. Jeremiah responds to a letter he was read by the priest Zephaniah.
- 4.2. **A letter within a letter!** (26-28)
- 4.3. Shemaiah urged them to detain the demented Jeremiah in prison & in the stocks.

5. **LETTER #4 TO THOSE IN CAPTIVITY! (29-32)**

- 5.1. **Vs.31** - Jeremiah warns them: [1] God didn't send him [2] Nor gave him a message.
- 5.2. **Vs.32** – Shemaiah would be judged for his sins, by dying childless in Babylon, & was never to see his mother land again.

6. **End:**

- 6.1. (www) "What life **does to us** depends largely on what life **finds in us!**"
- 6.2. **RECAP** - Seek the Lord – Want his best – Remember circumstances build us & prepare us fore what He has planned.
 - 6.2.1. Or, rebel & look for the easy quick shortcuts – but those circumstances will destroy us & rob us.
- 6.3. Gods thoughts & plans concerning us "**come from**" His **heart**, & "**lead to**" His **Peace!** (www)
 - 6.3.1. **Q:** Why look for substitutes???