

“Life in the World”

Jeremiah 29.1-14

Look AROUND room you will FEEL AT HOME – Familiar, Happy, AFRICA  
Walk OUT Door – Faces, Smiles, STARES, Pointing – VERY FAR from Home  
PAINFUL Experience to be STRANGER Anywhere

NIGERIAN Friend came to Visit me in my home Almaty, Kazakhstan  
Needed to Walk to PO – He came ALONG – BUSES Stopped to STARE!!  
Now you know HOW I FELT > MUZUNGU in Uganda for 8 years  
Arua after Idi Amin – Most Whites LEFT – Many KIDS Never Seen Muzungu  
Parents “If you are BAD, the WHITE Man will EAT YOU!” I can eat A LOT!!

How can we live in this world of CHANGE and UNBELIEF?

Where is God in CRISIS? Why are we left here in evil world?

Question asked 2500 years ago > by God’s Covenant People

WATCHED homeland destroyed by invading army

DRAGGED away to strange, idolatrous, evil land of BABYLON

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? Psalm 137:1-4

HOW CAN WE SING SONGS of the LORD WHILE in a FOREIGN LAND?”

Prophet Jeremiah ANSWERS THAT QUESTION in this Letter to Exiles

## 1. God’s Plan

GOD’S PLAN WAS VERY CLEAR > Revealed by Moses long ago

GOD SAVED NATION OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT > Freed to Serve Him

SIMPLE COVENANT FORMULA > Blessed? Obey! / Cursed? Disobey!

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God”  
Deuteronomy 28.1,2

CLEAR TEACHING > Blessing will be given for Obedience

Moses Explains OPPOSITE in Same Chapter of Deuteronomy

“However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him”

Deuteronomy 28.15,20

EVEN THE EXILE THEY NOW EXPERIENCED WAS PROPHESED

800 years before the Babylonians destroyed Judah, Moses said

“The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand...They will lay siege to all the cities and towns throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust will fall down...You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess. Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to another”

Deuteronomy 28.49,52,63,64

BUT IN WRATH GOD REMEMBERS MERCY > spoken thru Moses too

“When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations...then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he has scattered you”

Deuteronomy 30.1,3

594 BC Jeremiah writes > GOD’S PROMISED PLAN IS SET IN MOTION

v. 1 “Nebuchadnezzar carried them into exile”

v. 4 “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to those I carried into exile”

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases”  
Proverbs 21.1

Our POLITICIANS make PROMISES, PLANS

But GOD ACCOMPLISHES His PURPOSES

APOSTLE JOHN given a REVELATION of Plan & PURPOSE of God...

“I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!... I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with *one seated on the throne*” Revelation 4.1,2

UGANDA in 1980’s HARD Place to get ANYTHING done with Government

Take FORMS, APPLICATIONS for Signatures to Gov’t OFFICES

BIG MAN’S Office for IMPORTANT Signature – COAT Hanging on Chair

He would be OUT of the OFFICE > CHASING LINES!!

THRONE of God – Not EMPTY – No Suit Coat Hanging on Back of It

King of Kings and Lord of Lord ENTHRONED in SOVEREIGN GLORY

ONE ON THAT THRONE WROTE TO HIS DISOBEDIENT PEOPLE

v. 11 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.

Sometimes difficult to sense this plan > OFTEN FEEL ALONE & AFRAID

Joseph LANGUISHED in Egyptian prison> far from God & far from family

Looking back on suffering and tragedy of his life, said to brothers

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”  
Genesis 50.20

HARD TO SEE GOD’S GOOD PLAN FROM THE PRISON IN EGYPT

Easier to see from the throne of power

## 2. God's Principles

EASIEST PLACE TO SEE GOD'S PLAN IS IN PAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah NOT THE ONLY PROPHET in Judah

If asked people of Judah > Jeremiah WAS WORST PROPHET IN JUDAH

Most hated him, ignored him, some even tried to kill him > WEEPING

40 years of Service > Long, hard, difficult, FRUITLESS years

“Stand in the courtyard of the Lord's house and speak to all the people...  
Jeremiah 26.2

“If you do not listen to me and follow my law... Jeremiah 26.4

“then I will make this city an object of cursing among all nations” Jeremiah 26.6

“But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the Lord had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, ‘You must die!’”  
Jeremiah 26.8

“Do not listen to words of the prophets who say to you, ‘You will never serve the king of Babylon,’ for they are prophesying lies to you” Jeremiah 27.14

MORE POPULAR PROPHET > HANANIAH > NO EXILE, No Worries

POPULAR Preachers > Promise Wealth & Health – SOUNDS GREAT!!

NOW THAT EXILED OCCURRED, SHORT EXILE, NO PROBLEM

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place...”  
Jeremiah 28.2,3

Jeremiah the prophet said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie. Therefore thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the LORD.’” In that same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hananiah died. Jeremiah 28.15-17

HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE? Many religions? Claims?

Hananiah was SO IMPRESSIVE – Spoke in NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY  
 Popular, confident, believable, great following of people, IMPRESSIVE

## GOD KNOWS THE PLANS HE HAS FOR US

v. 11 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.

## POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

“Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?” Jeremiah 23.28

“Is not my word like fire,” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock to pieces?”  
 Jeremiah 23.29

1971-1979 Uganda controlled by Idi Amin – Terrible, Savage Dictator

Hundreds of thousands died – Very MANY were Christians

Many Ugandan Preachers claimed God told them better days were ahead

1979 – Another terrible dictator, Paulo Muwango, more killing & suffering

1980 – Milton Obote – MORE PEOPLE KILLED THAN BY AMIN

PEOPLE CLAIMED GOD TOLD THEM IT WOULD SOON BE BETTER

1985 – Tito Okello, More people suffered and killed, NO IMPROVEMENT

1986 – Yoweri Museveni – MUCH IMPROVEMENT > Now OVERSTAYED!

2 Years ago ARAB SPRING across NORTH AFRICA > Spring > WINTER!

WORD OF MAN– NO BASIS FOR HOPE – NO CONFIDENCE for Future

GOD CALLED JEREMIAH “The Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, Now I have put my words in your mouth” Jeremiah 1.9

AFTER INITIAL RESISTANCE GOD TOLD DISCOURAGED Jeremiah

“I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes”  
Jeremiah 5.14

“The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?”

Jeremiah 8.9

IF SOMEONE SAYS THEY HAVE A WORD FROM GOD ask ch. Vs.?

JESUS PRAYED FOR HIS CHURCH

“Make them holy by your word, your word is truth” John 17.17

ALL WE CAN HANG ON TO THRU LIFE > Naked Promises of God

WORD OF GREAT POWER > Promised Exile, Performed Exodus

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope”

Romans 15.4

ONE MAN IN ITALY > SWORE DEAD WOULD NEVER RISE AGAIN

Ordered huge granite rock placed over his grave

PROBLEM when lowering body into the grave / SMALL ACORN fell in

TODAY Huge Granite stone split into 2 / Giant Oak Tree OUT of Grave

ISAIAH THE PROPHET SAID “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever”  
Isaiah 40.8

### 3. God's Purpose

WHAT DOES GOD REALLY SAY TO EXILES IN BABYLON?

Vs. 10,11 “For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 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.

We LOVE v. 11, but we Better LISTEN Carefully to v. 10

v. 10 People of Judah will be in Babylon for SEVENTY YEARS

Meaning to Hearers? WE ARE NEVER GOING HOME AGAIN > Die Here

NO Promise of MERCEDES or a MANSION > Maybe not even SMART Phone

v. 11 DO NOT DESPAIR > Prosper, Hope, Future

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS? How can we serve God in a Pagan Land?

BUILD > v. 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.

build houses and plant gardens > Easy to break, Difficult to Build

Martin Luther ASKED “What would you do if you knew that Jesus was coming back tomorrow?” ANSWER “I would plant an apple tree today!”

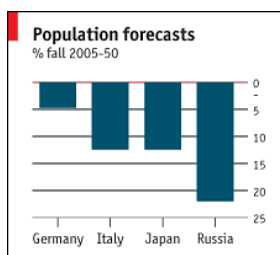
MEANING > Live each day fully for God, no regrets, be always ready

MARRY and MULTIPLY > v. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.

Your MOTHER’S are WORRIED that you’ll Marry a Stranger in CHINA!

NOT Saying you should Marry Now – Definitely NOT Saying have Sex Now!

Choice to Marry and Have Children is CHOICE of HOPE & FUTURE



Population of Germany, Italy, Japan Russia is DECLINING

Loss of Hope? Worry about Future? Lack of Faith?

Gay Marriage – Muslims have 10 Kids

Europe will be ISLAMIC under SHARIA Law

God blessed Israel in Egypt > Became as many as stars of the sky

God would bless Judah in Babylon > DO NOT DECREASE

ABORTION > Ultimate Sign of HOPELESSNESS and DESPAIR

Country	Number of Abortions	Abortion Rate
1 China	7,930,000	26.1 per 1,000 women
2 Russia	2,287,300	68.4 per 1,000 women
3 Vietnam	1,520,000	83.3 per 1,000 women
4 United States	1,365,700	22.9 per 1,000 women
5 Ukraine	635,600	57.2 per 1,000 women

**Source:** Alan Guttmacher Institute

SEEK PEACE AND PROSPERITY > if they prosper, you will too

v. 7 But 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 find your welfare.

SOME WANTED TO QUIT / TO BRING DOWN THE BABYLONIANS

SYRIANS, Pakistanis, Iraqis, Nigerians, Mali Destroying their OWN Nations

Summer in Wales / Friends took us to Town on Irish Sea / Sun, Sand, Play

DAY WENT ON / Sea went further and further out / TIDE WENT OUT

SMALL HARBOR / about 20 boats tied to the docks

SOON ALL BOATS WERE SITTING ON DRY SAND

WATER CAME INTO THE HARBOR, ALL BOATS ROSE

When Israel feels Secure / Palestinians will gain their Homeland

When CHINA Prospers / You will too / You are NOW part of CHINA

WE ARE TO SEEK GOD'S PEACE IN THE LAND WE LIVE

PEACE / not just absence of warfare / SHALOM, SALAAM total peace

v. 7 PRAY TO GOD FOR HIS SHALOM/peace TO BE UPON THE CITY



1. Shalom for our Neighbors / many lonely people? No family? Funds?

Empty SOULS in Dormitory – Hungry for Acceptance – Love – Meaning

Eagerly LOOKING in Wrong Places at Wrong Things > God Loves Them

2. Shalom for Environment / God Created Heaven & Earth / told us tend it

KZ Territory around our Apartment building is SEA OF TRASH & Garbage

SMALL CHILDREN PLAYING IN PILES OF RUBBISH

Asked Neighbor “How can people live like this?” NOBODY CARES NOW

Went PICK Up – Passerby’s Shouted, NOT YOUR Business!! Someone’s JOB

Gradually MANY NEIGHBORS joined in our PROJECT > IMPROVEMENT

3. Shalom for those in Authority – over UNI, City, Region, Nation

Paul to Timothy

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2.1-4

BIBLE CONNECTS SHALOM TO JUSTICE

the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness,  
quietness and trust forever Isaiah 32.17

When Leaders are Just, Praise them / When Corrupt, Report them, Without Fear

NO MATTER HOW BIG THEY MAY SEEM, GOD IS BIGGER, JUDGE

“There is no peace for the wicked” says the Lord Isaiah 48.22

4. Shalom with God / Peace with God found thru Prince of Peace

Prince has a name Jesus / Savior / Why Savior? Salvation from Sin Needed

REASON DO NOT HAVE PEACE? Sin / Broken relationship with God

Apostle Peter “This is the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all” Acts 10.36

Apostle Paul “since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5.1

PRINCE OF SHALOM / ETERNAL LIFE / ABUNDANT LIFE / REAL LIFE

WE ARE TO LIVE THAT LIFE IN THIS REAL WORLD

SEEKING SHALOM WITH ALL MEN, & MOST OF ALL WITH GOD

#### 4. God’s Priority

GOD’S PRIORITY IS HIS PEOPLE /

HIS PEOPLE MUST MAKE HIM THEIR PRIORITY

v. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

WHAT A GREAT ANSWER FROM GOD / you will seek me

v. 14 “I will be found by you” declares the Lord

NOTICE GOD ASKS FOR ALL OUR HEART, not  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  ALL=100%

CONFESSION OF EARLY CHRISTIANS / “Jesus is Lord”

As New Believer / put a sticker on my car “Jesus is Lord”

SISTER’S HUSBAND ASKED “What does that mean?”

Romans knew what that meant / Caesar is NOT their Lord / Great Offense

LOYAL ROMAN SWORE UNQUESTIONED ALLEGIANCE Lord Caesar

Jesus is Lord / READY TO DIE WITH JESUS / He is my God and King

Ugandan Preacher in Bazaar in Nairobi, Kenya / LARGE CROWD GATHERED  
 ASKED How many want to go to hell? RAISE YOUR HAND / All Hands Up  
 THEN How many of you want to live fully for Jesus? NO HANDS UP  
 ANSWER People want to go to Heaven and live like Hell

James DOUBLE MINDED MAN who DOUBTS

“the one who doubts...must not suppose that he will receive anything from the  
 Lord”  
 James 1.6,7

PREACHER TOLD STORY ABOUT MAN WHO LOVED HIS PET PIG  
 Lived in House / Sat at Table / Slept in Own Bed in own Room  
 ASKED PASTOR “Can my pig come to church with me?” NO PROBLEM  
 Sat in Pews / Sang Songs / Learned Prayers //// Got Baptized  
 RAINS CAME / LOOKED OUT WINDOW into Muddy Yard / ROLLED IN  
 WHY? / BECAUSE HE WAS STILL A PIG / churched, baptized PIG!!

No New Nature / No New Birth / No True Salvation

CONFIDENCE REAL HOME IN NEXT WORLD

STRENGTH TO LIVE RIGHTEOUS LIFE IN THIS WORLD

CAN YOU SING GOD’S SONG IN THIS FOREIGN LAND?

In Christ’s Power the Answer should be Yes!

Peter describes our New Identity in Christ /

you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own  
 possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of  
 darkness into his marvelous light  
 1 Peter 2.9

Jeremiah 29:<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>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: <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; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup>Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup>But 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 find your welfare. <sup>8</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, <sup>9</sup>for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD. <sup>10</sup>“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup>I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.