



FROM THE ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

This Bible verse is a common verse used in many times of uncertainty. It is frequently used as a single verse and applied in many ways without any reference of the context. But I think it is the historical context of this verse that allows us to see the great comfort that God provides.

The prophet Jeremiah was a prophet (messenger of God) to the Israelites during their time in exile in Babylon in 597 BC – 538 BC. The Babylonians attacked Israel in a brutal way with the Bible (and historians) referencing sickening crimes against humanity. The Babylonians pretty much wiped out most of Israel killing the venerable then taking the rest of Israel by force as prisoners in Babylon for 70 long years. It was when they were in Israel the prophet Jeremiah shared God’s messages to the Israelites. **‘For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’** This message was a great message of comfort to the Israelites.

See, even though God’s people were prisoners in a foreign nation God was still their God and they were still His people. He made known that He had plans for the Israelites with God promising hope and a future. After such a long time in exile hearing the message of hope from God would have brought great comfort. In a time where Israel were facing the biggest challenge of their lives God was going to give them hope and a future, and that is exactly what he did. After 70 years the Persian Empire overthrew the Babylonians and released the Israelites back to their own land, even providing them with resources to help them build the temple of God.

See this verse of hope brought great comfort to a people who were going through an awful time but what does it mean for us today? We can be assured that God is always with us no matter how tough our lives are. We to, like the Israelites, see a glimpse into God's plans for us, a plan for hope and a future. You see this clearly at the cross of Jesus. Jesus died in order to give us hope and a future. He died in order to make us right with God, in order that we might be able to live forever in heaven with Him. I know one thing for sure, God always keeps His promises.

If you are finding this time of our lives really hard I hope this verse brings you great comfort. We know that we have a God who is always with us and we know that he offers us hope and a future with Him forever.

How great is our God!!

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