

November 24, 2013

## Lesson 12: Jeremiah



### Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14

These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 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. 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. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord.

For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I

will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

# Jeremiah

Jeremiah 29:1,4-14

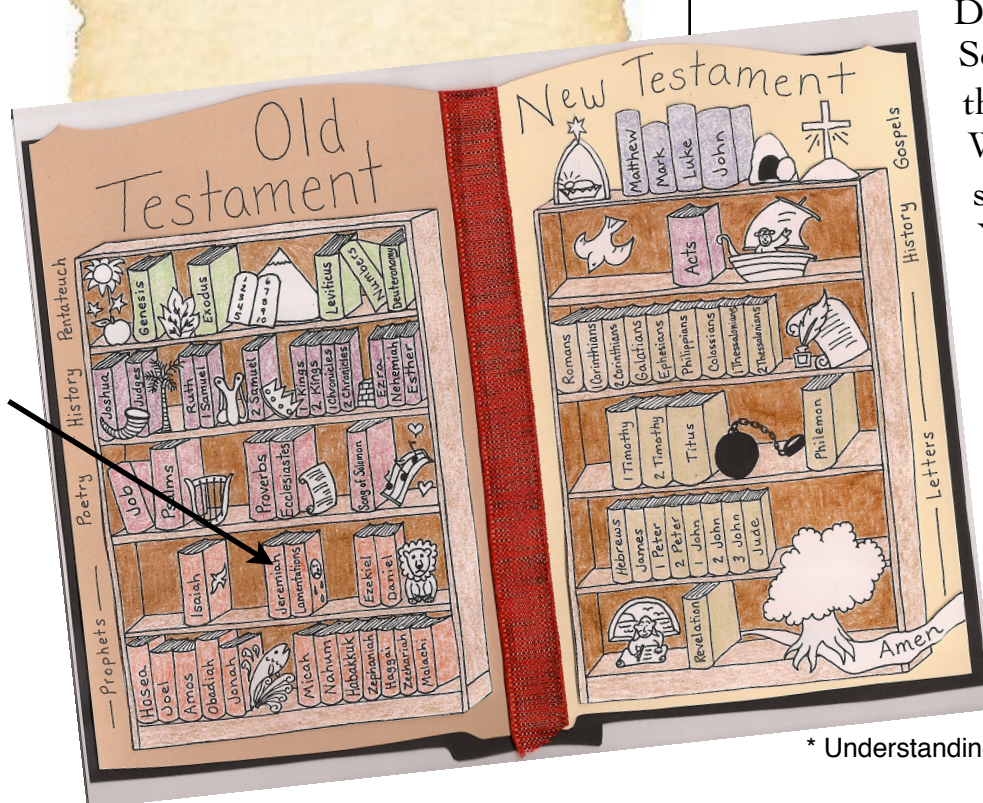
“For surely I  
know the plans  
I have for you,  
says the Lord.”

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**The Big Story Truth:** Even in exile, when things looked hopeless, God had plans for God’s people. So too, God has plans for each of us... plans to give us hope and a future.

**About This Scripture Passage:** Jeremiah is preaching to those who have been carried off into captivity in Babylon. His prophesy is that they should settle in for a long captivity and use this political reality as an opportunity to realign with God’s way of doing things. Jeremiah writes of the time the people will spend in exile kind of like a giant time-out. It was a chance for the people to regroup, to get back in line with God’s plan for their lives, and then to be ready for what God would have in store for them next. Jeremiah was adamant that although the return back home (back the the promised land) would not be quick in coming, that God was still with them. Jeremiah preached that “faith did not depend on outward signs of Yahweh’s presence or protection.

David’s throne, the holy city, Solomon’s Temple, and even the nation itself could vanish. When all the national religious symbols were destroyed, Yahweh would nonetheless maintain his relationship with those who believed in him.”\*



\* Understanding the Bible by Stephan L. Harris



### **Making the Connection:**

The idea of a time-out or a grounding is something that kids can identify with. The fact that a parent would care enough to enforce limits and to establish boundaries for their kid's protection is part of what kids need in order to grow up feeling secure and safe in this world. The prophet Jeremiah saw God actively involved in this time in Judah's life. The exile, according to Jeremiah, was not something outside of God's control, but rather something that God used to help his children regroup. Jeremiah also said that while there was no avoiding a long time in exile, that God still loved his people and would lead them back home again. It's important that our kids hear this message. God, like a good parent, seeks our well being... always. God doesn't forget. God doesn't walk away from his promises even when we mess up. God is constantly, always, looking for a way to draw us back into the good relationship that is his vision for all of creation!

**Where in the World Are We?** Jeremiah is writing from the ruined city of Jerusalem to those who have been carried off into captivity in Babylon.

### *For Your Reflection:*

*When things feel like they are getting out of whack for you, what helps you reset?*

*Think about a time when you really messed something up—maybe a relationship or an opportunity. Looking back on it, can you see God's loving presence with you even then? How did God work even through that time to shape your future in a positive way?*

