

SEEK & FIND - JEREMIAH 29

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Main Idea: god will reveal Himself to us when we put Him first i

INTRODUCTION

GOOD EVENING

My name is AVRAHAM (ah-vrah- HAHM) אַבְרָהָם
Sounds like AbraHAM – named after him
Parents wanted to instill in me the importance of
following God
Abraham faced many tests & trials
Parents knew I would as well
Not easy time to raise a family – nation
going downhill fast

But I'm not here to talk about myself this evening
Talk about my good friend Jeremiah
Even more than that about our God JEHOVAH

We've heard it said that God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives.
It's easy to agree when we like the plan.

But sometimes, God's plan turns out to be different than what we were thinking.
BIRTH OF HANDICAPPED CHILD, changes whole life
LOSS OF JOB, can't find another
MATE GETS CANCER, pray, gets worse

SAME THING to us Jews in 597 BC
NATION about to be destroyed for their sin and rebellion against God

GOD SENT A PROPHET TO WARN THEM - JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH THE MAN

yirmeyahu abbreviated to yirmeyah = "Yahweh hurls" or "Yahweh founds

Hilkiah - father a priest – godly upbringing
most priests unfaithful, Jeremiah & father were

called by God when about 20, 13th year of King Josiah 627 BC
I was from same hometown and knew him growing up
Among very few Jewish boys who wanted to obey law and
follow God
moved to Jerusalem to minister to capital of nation

Gentle, tender, sympathetic – loved his people (who hated him)
Went through much pain and suffering “**Weeping Prophet**”

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND LEADING UP TO CAPTIVITY

MINISTERED as prophet until Jerusalem destroyed 586 BC – 41 years
under Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah

JOSIAH found Law (Gen-Deut), reinstated it
Many opposed, ridiculed Jeremiah for supporting it
Own relatives said he was a dangerous fanatic

Other kings less godly
Jeremiah prophesy, warn them about idolatry, false
prophets, immorality, greed
Jeremiah physically abused, threatened, tried to kill
several times

WEEPING PROPHET
Not ‘leaping prophet’
Sin & consequences broke his heart
Broke God’s heart as well

DIDN’T THINK THEIR COUNTRY WOULD EVER FALL (like you feel USA)

God always comes through for them
-misery in Egypt, God sends Moses and leads them out,
through Red Sea
-40 years later leads into Promised Land under Joshua
-2 Kings 19 Assyrian army invaded, people scared,
Hezekiah prayed killed, 185,000
God will come through again
-Babylonians invade, all the prophets say God will
destroy Babylon (false prophets)

CAPTIVITY ITSELF

1. In **605** B.C.
2. In **601** B.C.

LEADERS OF ISRAEL taken to Babylon captive
Lesser men took their place, continued to rebel Babylon
Jeremiah told them to submit – seemed like unpatriotic,
But what he had been saying for 30 years was right!

Jeremiah 29 during this time

Things then get WORSE

3. Final rebellion, Jerusalem destroyed **586 BC**
JERUSALEM UNDER SIEGE – much suffering inside
People took it out on Jeremiah, cruel prison, accused of being a traitor
Some fled to Egypt – took Jeremiah as prisoner, died in Egypt almost 80 years old
Ministered faithfully for 50 years

I wasn't with him when he died. I was thousands of miles away in Assyria.
Jeremiah gave me a letter to take to the Jews in capt
Just before final destruction, Jeremiah taken to
Egypt
Honor & privilege he'd entrust me with such an
important document
Later became part of your Bible – Jeremiah 29

TRANSITION

Our focus: Jeremiah 29 – Jerusalem 2nd defeat, deportation

JEREMIAH 29

LETTER TO THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON:

SETTLE IN AND STAY, THERE A LONG TIME

False prophets: home within 2 years

God, no, 70 years!

JEREMIAH 29 LETTER

NOT get discouraged, quit

Don't demand God change circumstances so live easier

NOT to fight, oppose Babylonians where live

NOT believe false prophets who say you'll be back in a year or

2 so don't settle in

BUT to settle in, make the best of it, live peaceful lives of

prosperity

Not be bitter, resentful, difficult

But to adjust to life with unbelievers, be good example, even if unfair/unjust

US: "love your enemies," not bitter toward them

TRANSITION

God's word through Jeremiah to us back them apply to you today

JEREMIAH 29:1-3 tells about how and why this letter was written

4-23 give the whole letter

Lift out one particular section that is heart of God's message then and now:

10 This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.

Prophecy Daniel Knew, watched coming

Deliverance not coming quickly – but is coming eventually!

GREAT THINGS GOD DID during these 70 years

Daniel ministered, great impact on Babylon & Assyria for hundreds of years

Magi come to see Baby Jesus

Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael also greatly used, role models of faith (fiery furnace)

Nebuchadnezzar a believer (Dan 4:37)

Old Testament books written during this time

2 Kings

Ezekiel

Lamentations

Daniel

Jeremiah

Psalms 137

*Jews started seeing need to repent, get right with God

400 years in Egypt to do this, 70 years here

I could see it happening

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.

plans God thinks about us all the time

I wondered Always thinking of us-because He loves us (**like we have plans for our children**)

God has plans for us Not just thoughts –**Rom 8:28**

They are plans to bring us **GOOD THINGS**

NOT by change in circumstances, immediate defeat of enemies and return

BUT by change within heart

***Ps 40:5 Many, O Lord my God,
are the wonders you have done.
The things you planned for us
no one can recount to you;
were I to speak and tell of them,
they would be too many to declare.***

God knows the plans He has, ***we don't know them!***

But God knows our tomorrows better than we know our
yesterdays!

Top of a tall building looking down and watching parade go by below

Jeremiah 31:31, 34 "The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

630 YEARS LATER God ratified this covenant by sending Jesus to die on cross for us

God kept His promise, will keep future ones

Psalm 139:16 says "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

MY REACTION TO THIS

Prosper, not harm God wants to **PROSPER** us
God gives us what we **NEED**, not what we **WANT**
He gives what would have asked for if knew all He knows!
Why do some think God wants to harm them?
If God doesn't give you what you pray for its because He has
something **FAR BETTER**
We can't always tell what is prosperous and what isn't
HORSE, 15 WILD HORSES, BROKEN LEG,

hope and a future God wants to give us **HOPE & A FUTURE**

ETERNAL SECURITY

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Seal = guarantee (ring in hot wax, like notary public seal)

*Holy Spirit is like the **NOTARY PUBLIC**. He helps to guarantee the accuracy of the signature, and if necessary will testify in court.*

*When a piece of **registered mail** is mailed from a post office, it is sealed until delivered. Actually, only two persons can open registered mail - the sender (if it is returned to him) and the designated recipient.*

Holy Spirit in us guarantees God signed our salvation with the blood of Jesus – eternally secure

"I give to them (Christians) eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand. My father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of my father's hand." John 10:28-9

WE ARE SECURE BECAUSE:

"It is a trustworthy statement: ... If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself."

"A battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out."
Mt 12:20, quoting Isa 42:3

"Christ, who has begun a good work in you, will carry it on to completion as the day of Christ Jesus." Ph 1:6

"Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account." Romans 4:1-12 (v. 8 here),

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us, For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 8:37-9

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"Eternal" life already a possession now
"Given" - sheep just receive it unconditionally
Jesus says we will "Never" perish - "**NEVER**" = *ou ma*
strongest Greek negative
Secure in Christ's hand, none can open it - "**NO ONE**" =
Satan or man himself

BIRTH, born again, new babies, etc - Can't be UNborn

SONSHIP & ADOPTION - Can't change being physical son, irreversible

CARNAL BELIEVERS - Christians living by flesh, sin; still believers, didn't lose salvation

LOST SHEEP stray from flock, but still legally part of that flock no matter what

GIFT - nothing to earn/deserve, nothing to lose

PETER denied Christ 3 times, never lost salvation

BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Eph 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

Eph 1:5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Eph 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

Then It will take captivity 70 years for them to repent, turn, call on God

call upon me and come and pray to me prayer, **BELL IN HEAVEN**
Prayer not PREPARATION for the battle/ministry, prayer IS the battle/ministry!

I will listen to you. Promise!!!
I RELY on this promise all the time

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

Seek ME – not seek my blessings! **PARENTS want children to love them**

Seek = hunger and thirst - Like deer pants for streams of water,

OT **Deuteronomy 4:29** *But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

NT **Matt 7:7-8** *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

Seek with all your heart

HOW MUCH YOU SEEK SOMETHING SHOWS HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO YOU

I loose something, look for it – the more important the harder I look!!!

Matt 13:44 *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

45 *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*

COST: "SOLD EVERYTHING HE HAD" head may seek God, heart than finds him.

Phil 3:7-11 *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

find God waiting to be found, never hiding, always up to us

14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

JEW'S LOOK FORWARD to returning to home land, temple, God's presence and blessing
I looked forward to returning to Jerusalem - Jeremiah again – never did - heaven

YOU LOOK FORWARD to going to our home in heaven

We all go into places of captivity - Our own fault, Not our fault - God behind, uses them all

HOW TO HANDLE LIVING IN 'CAPTIVITY' TODAY?

READ Jeremiah 29:10-14

ACCEPT IT AS FROM HAND OF A LOVING GOD WHO HAS PLAN

DISCIPLINE – to turn us from sin (repent and it turns to suffering) - Reap what we sow

SUFFERING – mature us, stretch us, opportunity to trust God, others see God in us

Either way, submit to it, don't fight it, don't complain, blame, try to force God

Don't fight the Babylonians, submit and trust

Our heavenly Father longs for us to be significant parts of His story.

GIVE UP FALSE HOPES OF A QUICK FIX OR EASY WAY OUT

Don't listen to the false prophets today

Keep faith in God no matter what

SEEK GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, 100%

MATE: seek 110% with all heart, not partly or won't find

***Ps 145:17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and loving toward all he has made.***

***18 The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.***

***19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.***

***20 The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.***

CONCLUSION

We've heard it said that God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives.

It's easy to agree when we like the plan.

But sometimes, God's plan turns out to be different than what we were thinking.

Seek God with all your heart

Him first in all things in life

DON'T WRITE YOUR STORY AND ASK GOD TO EDIT IT – LET GOD WRITE YOUR STORY, WITH NO EDITING!

We write our own story and want God to edit it

God doesn't want to be your editor but AUTHOR

GOOD PLANS for us – prosper us

He will incorporate all of the little chapters of our lives – whether we see them as triumphs or tragedies - into His epic story.

Not all the chapters will be easy. Don't try to edit what He writes!

But God promises that the last chapter will make sense of all the others if we let Him write our story.