

4.12 Hope for the Future

Unit 3: Promises of Hope

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14

Date: November 12 & 16

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. Jeremiah 29:11

The Point & Call Back:
God Brings Hope

The people have lost their homeland and their temple and are entering a dark and turbulent time. They feel alone and desperate, but God promises the people that God will never abandon them or leave them hopeless.

STORY SUMMARY: Hope for the Future

The story of God's people is not always an easy one. We read repeatedly in the Old Testament about God providing and caring for God's people, yet in this story the promises seem to have come to an end. The temple has been destroyed, and God's people have been scattered. They are alone, abandoned, and without their spiritual and cultural center, the temple. The period of exile continues for 70 years. The people can do nothing to change this and must wait and trust in God alone for their deliverance. As they wait, God's people are encouraged to make a home where they are, to live and contribute, and be an influence on their communities. In time, they will come to see God's ultimate plan and purpose. But while they wait, God continues to be with them. Even though things seem difficult and hopeless, God is with them. In our own dark and lonely moments, as we wait for God's plan to be revealed, God is with us.

THE POINT: *God provides a future full of hope.*

There are times when every faithful person feels abandoned by God, as if they have been left alone during a difficult and painful time. Some of us turn away from God during these times, while others lean more fully into God. While our response to difficulties may vary, God's response is always the same. God waits with us and promises that God will provide a future that is hopeful.

BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS: The Exile

After the death of King Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom was called Israel, and the southern kingdom was called Judah. In 722 BCE, the Assyrians conquered Israel. One hundred years later, the Assyrians capital of Nineveh fell to the Babylonians. To help keep the country safe, the kings of Judah began to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king. However, two kings of Judah rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in 586 BCE, destroyed the temple, and sent God's people away. The Babylonian exile lasted for 70 years. It was a desperate time in which God seemed to have abandoned God's people, but God continued to protect and be with the people.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Prayer

Prayers can serve many purposes. We might praise God, seek answers to questions, pray on behalf of others, or even disagree with God. Regardless of the purpose, prayer enhances our relationship with God. We can talk to God even when we feel scared and alone. (S&T)

Hope Youth Volunteers

The Israelites were not where they thought they would be. They are far from home and strangers in a strange land. It looked they were forgotten by God. God saw them and sent them hope. He used his faithful servant Jeremiah to give them a message of hope and encouragement. Who can you encourage this week with a word of hope? Who needs to hear that God has great plans for them; plans for a hope and a future. Maybe you need to remind yourself of this powerful truth. We are so grateful for all the ways you serve Hope Youth!

Blessings

The Youth Team