

# BROKEN PEOPLE FAITHFUL GOD

## A STUDY ON JEREMIAH

### STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, November 30, 2025

**Teaching Title:** How to Live When Life Isn't What You Wanted

**Key Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:4–14

CEDAR VALLEY

### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** Jeremiah 43–44

**Tuesday:** Jeremiah 45

**Wednesday:** Jeremiah 46–47

**Thursday:** Jeremiah 48–49

**Friday:** Jeremiah 50–52

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

### MEMORY TOPIC:

Purpose, Faithful in Babylon

**MEMORY VERSE:** Jeremiah 29:11 NLT

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### Introduction:

What do we do when we find ourselves in a place we don't want to be? How do we live our lives when we feel stuck in a situation we never asked for? Jeremiah 29 addresses this very topic. It contains a letter from the prophet Jeremiah to the Judean people who were forced to leave Jerusalem and were now living in Babylon. We see that it was ultimately God who carried them into exile because of their disobedience. The letter offers surprising instructions to those living in exile on how to live in a place they did not want to be. God had plans to restore them to their homeland in Jerusalem, but not for 70 years. In the meantime, they were told to settle down, seek peace, and pray for the city. They were told to marry, have children, build houses, and plant gardens (29:5–6). The people of Judah certainly found themselves to be in a place they didn't want to be, yet God would promised to renew their hope even while they were in exile. In the same way, life is sometimes not what we hoped it would be. Like the Judeans in Jeremiah's day, we must remember that there is purpose in our placement.

#### Questions:

Ice Breaker: If you suddenly had to move to a completely new place for a few years, what would be the first thing you'd do to make it feel like home, and why?

1. Read Jeremiah 29:4–14 together. Imagine you're one of the exiles in Babylon. How would you feel upon arrival in a foreign land? (See Notes)
2. In 29:4, what title does Jeremiah give God in this verse? Why do you think this is important?
3. What specific things did Jeremiah say the people should do in 29:5–6. Why's this so surprising?
4. What were the messages of the false prophets according to 29:8–9? Their words would have been tempting to believe. How serious is it when someone claims to speak for God but doesn't?

5. When God says He has “plans to prosper you and not to harm you,” (29:11) what do these plans refer to in the original context? How might the exiles have heard this promise? (see Digging Deeper)
6. What does God promise if the people call on Him and pray (29:12–14)? What does it mean to “seek God with all your heart”?
7. Do you feel like you are in “exile”, in a place you don’t want to be? How is God asking you to live faithfully in this season?
  - What does it look like to “plant roots” in a place you don’t want to be?
  - How does the promise of future restoration give you hope during a time of crisis?

## NOTES

Definition of “exile”: The forced removal of Israelites from their land, which resulted from the Babylonian deportations. The first wave of deportations started in 605 BC, including Daniel. There were other deportations in 597, 587 BC, and later. In 538–536 BC, the first wave of Babylonian Jews were allowed to return home.

– paraphrased from John Walton and Andrew Hill, *Old Testament Today*. Zondervan Academic, Grand Rapids, 2013.

## DIGGING DEEPER

### Question 5—

Jeremiah 29:11 is often misunderstood. Below is a helpful explanation of this passage from *The Bible Project*. For the whole article, follow this link: <https://bibleproject.com/articles/what-does-jeremiah-2911-mean-i-know-plans-i-have-you/>

“Jeremiah offers a hope that doesn’t erase suffering but transforms it. With each new tree planted and new child born, the people will experience God’s creative care. They are not home, and that’s painful, but as they learn to cultivate peace in the land of their enemies, they will experience the fruits of restoration.

In the Bible’s Prophetic Literature, hope never involves a denial of suffering. Instead, it’s grounded in trust in God’s presence, even in the darkest moments. For Jeremiah’s audience, every house they build, every garden they tend, every prayer they offer for Babylon’s welfare is an act of trust—a living hope in God’s promise that their story is not over.

When searching for Bible verses about God’s plan for our lives, we may encounter [Jeremiah 29:11](#) used as a feel-good slogan, a promise of personal prosperity detached from its historical and literary context. But by imagining that these words promise an easy path forward or a vision of personal success for the future, we might accidentally imitate the false prophets who naively promised things they could not ensure. We might turn *shalom* into a platitude that masks reality and ignores the complexities of suffering in our midst. And if we do that, we could end up moving further away from the real *shalom* that comes from aligning with God’s plan for all humanity to participate in his long, patient work of restoration.

Jeremiah sheds a new light on what real hope looks like. To embrace the promise of [Jeremiah 29:11](#) is to step into this paradox: Peace comes not from escaping hardship but from seeking the good of others, our enemies included, and trusting that God is always creating life in the midst of our suffering.”