

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14



Jeremiah's prophetic activity was during the final years of the kingdom of Judah and during the early years of the exile.

The Book of Jeremiah is notorious for being more thematic than chronological, so it can be difficult to follow the timeline of events at what was a very politically charged time.

Our passage today was part of a letter Jeremiah sent to the people of Judah already in exile before the final collapse of the kingdom. This letter was from 10-12 years before the fall of Jerusalem and Judah.



Jeremiah is often referred to as the Weeping Prophet and is usually thought to be the author of the Book of Lamentations.

The passage here shows Jeremiah providing pastoral care to the exiles around two ideas: there must be a realistic and intentional embrace of the exile as a place where the Jews must now be and where God has summoned them to obedience; and there is a long-term hope for return and restoration that can be affirmed and accepted.

~Walter Brueggemann

This Is What The Lord
Almighty, The God Of
Israel, Says To All Those
I Carried Into Exile From
Jerusalem To Babylon:

[Jeremiah 29-4](#)

[BibleWordings.com](#)

Jeremiah wrote a letter to homesick exiles and delivered to them a word from the Lord: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

Your old life is dead, and your new life is to be found in Babylon so deal with it, accept it, and adjust to it

Jeremiah didn't want them to have false optimism. Too many pundits were predicting a quick end to the captivity, so he was giving them a dose of reality about their situation.

5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, so that they may have sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.

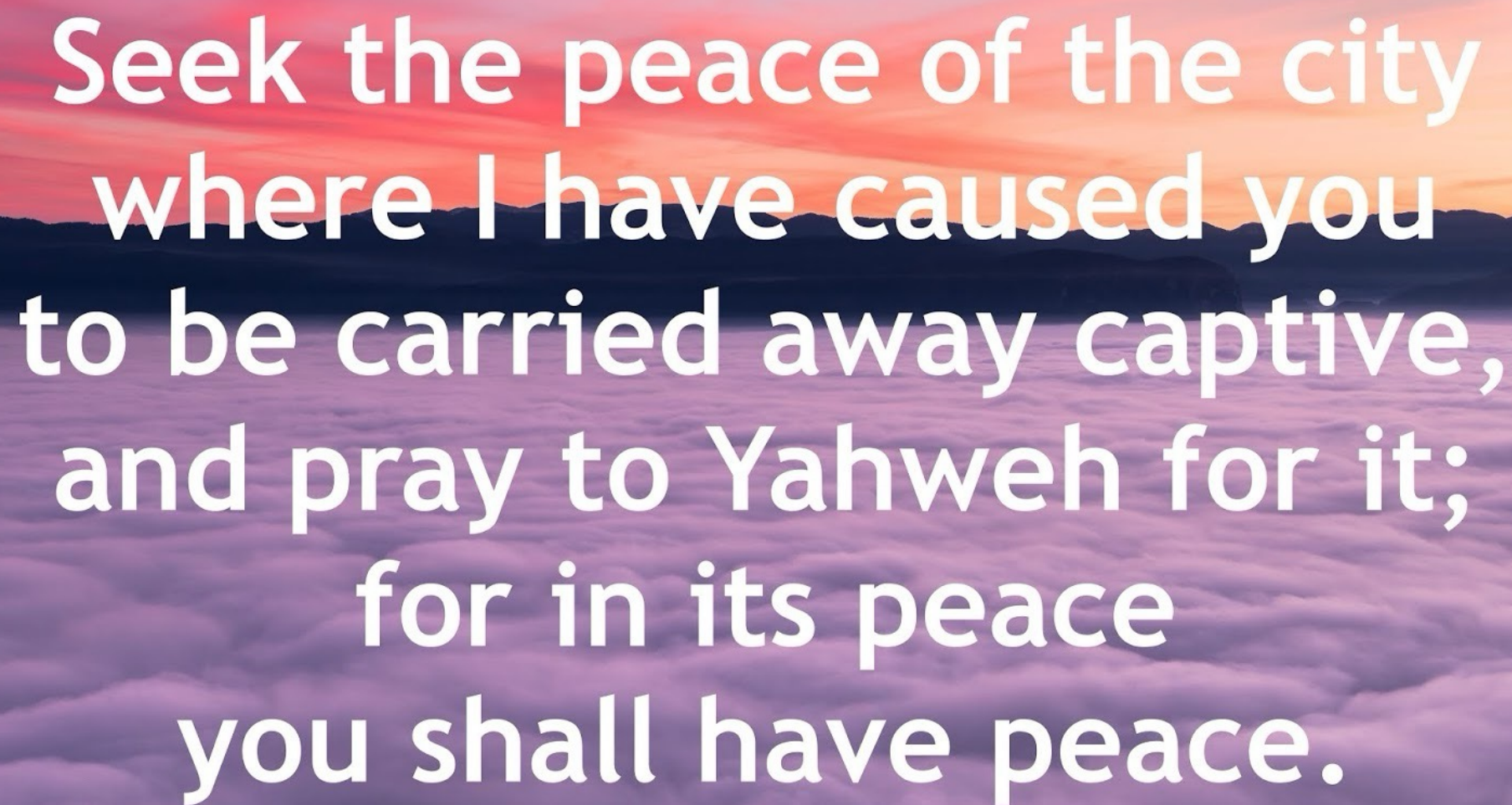
Jeremiah 29:5-6

Jeremiah's message was radically practical and innovative. He told the Jews that rather than resisting, resenting, or rejecting their circumstances, they should put down roots and become productive.

This is a message for all who live in what they believe has become an alien culture due to technology, immigration, and new accommodations to inclusivity. Communication has changed, neighbors have changed, food has changed, culture has changed.

Yes, there is much about the past that we miss, but whining about it and pining for it will not make it reappear. Jeremiah is challenging us as much as the Israelites to embrace the place where God has us and find ways to be faithful in our living, and thankful in our service, so that others might inquire about our inspiration, our resolve, and our trust, and thereby be drawn into a relationship with God.

~Bruce Boak



Seek the peace of the city
where I have caused you
to be carried away captive,
and pray to Yahweh for it;
for in its peace
you shall have peace.

Jeremiah 29:7

This letter also addresses the wellbeing of the enemies among whom they now live. Pray for the welfare of the Babylonians. Remember that the God you serve is the God who rules over all people in all places at all times.

God is with you just as much in Babylon as God was in Jerusalem

We serve a God who is the God of everyone, everywhere. This is good news of great joy for all people. This is the God who so loved the world. And all means all.

FOR THEY ARE FALSELY
PROPHESYING TO YOU IN
MY NAME; I HAVE NOT
SENT THEM, DECLARES THE
LORD.”

- JEREMIAH 29:9

Jeremiah then warns the exiles about the false prophets who keep saying that their time there will be short. He tells them that the judgment will be 70 years.

They will not return to Jerusalem, but their grandchildren will.

God tells them that there are plans for them and they will not be abandoned there forever. God has plans, but for those plans to come to fruition, the people need to survive. So, they need to pray for Babylon, that no harm comes to the city, so that they too may survive for what God has in store for them next.

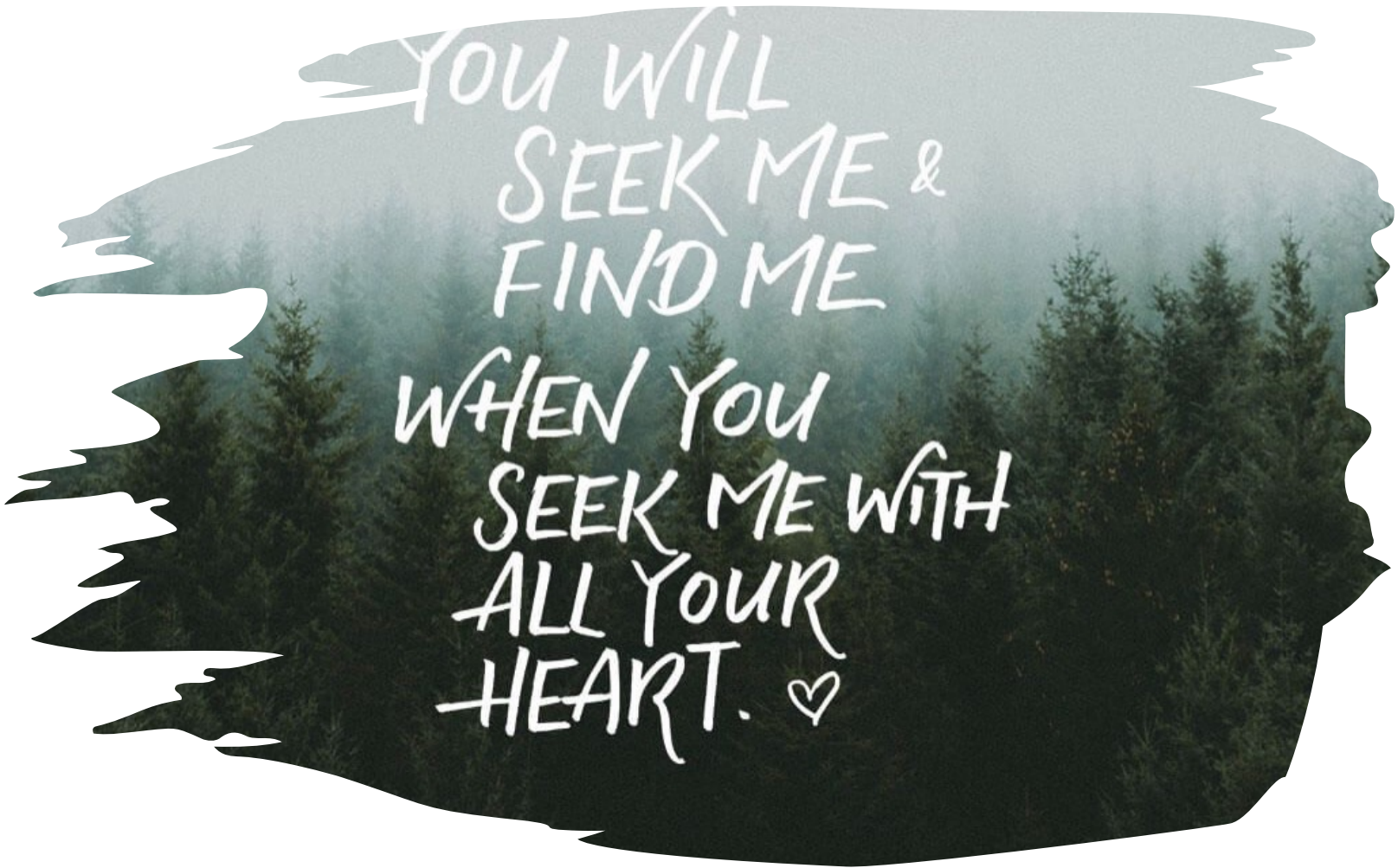
FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE
FOR YOU, DECLARES THE LORD,
PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND
NOT TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO
GIVE YOU HOPE AND A FUTURE.

JEREMIAH 29:11

Jeremiah reminds them that hope and assurance were not to rest on naïve patriotic and unreasoned expectations that God would swiftly put an end to the power of Babylon and send the exiles back to their homes.

Hope and assurance were to be built upon the painful acceptance of their reality under Babylonian rule for the present time.

They had to learn to adapt to the situation and to endure it.



YOU WILL
SEEK ME &
FIND ME

WHEN YOU
SEEK ME WITH
ALL YOUR
HEART. ♡

The period of waiting and surviving in a grim and threatening world of exile were to be years of spiritual discipline and an opportunity for repentance.

When the time of discipline had been accomplished then Israel could seek God with a whole heart and only then could a return to their homeland become possible, because only then would it become spiritually meaningful.

Life in exile would provide the essentials for a continuing relationship with God

I WILL BE FOUND BY YOU, DECLARES THE
LORD, AND I WILL RESTORE YOU FROM
CAPTIVITY AND GATHER YOU FROM ALL THE
NATIONS AND PLACES TO WHICH I HAVE
BANISHED YOU, DECLARES THE LORD. I
WILL RESTORE YOU TO THE PLACE FROM
WHICH I SENT YOU INTO EXILE.”

- JEREMIAH 29:14

The Lord may have seemed hidden and unavailable, but if they will just seek the Lord and pray – they must engage in serious acts of piety and penance – and reorient their lives, then the Lord will be faithful, available, ready and able to save.

The Lord will overcome hopelessness and open up a new possibility for Judah. This is the heart of the gospel: God is available in the midst of despair and will override both the despair and the circumstances that generate it.