

**CHARITY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH BIBLE STUDY**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**  
***“THAT’S NOT WHAT IT MEANS!”***  
***“I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU”***  
**READ: JEREMIAH CHAPTERS 28 AND 29**

This Wednesday, we conclude our Bible Study series “That’s Not What It Means!” with a lesson on one of the most popular verses in the whole Bible. We find this quote in homes in kitchens, bathrooms, and offices. Jeremiah 29:11 is almost a one verse anthem! But does it mean what many Christians seem to think it means? Let’s find out together.

Pastor Rivers teaches that context is the most important way to understand scripture. Context is what happened before, during and after the text. Please read Jeremiah 29:11 NIV to prepare to answer and discuss the following questions:

**JEREMIAH 29:11 NIV**

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.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What does this scripture mean to you, and have you used it to predict a future of prosperity and success for your life?

**ANSWER:** When I first heard and read it I was inspired by God’s assurance of success in my future and the hope of a good and prosperous life. However, I had not read Chapter 29 where the verse comes from and certainly had not read Chapter 28, which gives the “context for the text!” Reading these two chapters are essential if we are to understand what Jeremiah 29:11 means or more importantly what it did NOT mean! I would have understood clearly that God was not talking to me or us in 20<sup>th</sup> Century nor the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

2. Who was Jeremiah, what kind of prophet was he and where did he rank among the Old Testament prophets?

**ANSWER:** Jeremiah was one of the four Major Prophets in the Old Testament. They are in order of their books Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet. Jeremiah prophesied and wrote his powerful letter to Jewish exiles in Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar and spoke the word of God for justice and obedience.

3. Who is the “you” in Jeremiah 29:11 and why is it an error in Biblical interpretation to believe we should apply this message to our personal lives in 2023?

**ANSWER:** Because in Jeremiah 29:11 the LORD was not talking to one person but the whole nation of Judah and not just one or two families, either. In fact, the LORD was telling them that their past disobedience and rejection of Him had caused them to go through oppression and troubles but God’s future plan for them was to make them prosper and not harm them and give them a hopeful future! Not a person or even one family but the all the exiles in Babylon!

4. Who was the prophet Hananiah and what was the difference between his prophecy and the prophetic words of Jeremiah?

**ANSWER:** In Jeremiah 28:1 Hananiah, is introduced as a prophet from Gideon who also was exposed by Jeremiah as a false prophet in Judah. Hananiah was a false prophet who claimed he heard from the Lord but there was no evidence in his prophecies that he heard from God at all! Hananiah was a prosperity prophet who declared the Lord would remove the yoke off of the necks of his people in Babylon in two years! Jeremiah on the other hand gave a true prophecy by telling the Jews to settle down in Babylon and make the best out of bad situation that God had taken them into because of their disobedience, blasphemy and idolatry. Hananiah prophesied a beautiful lie while Jeremiah told a painful truth!

**5. How does the reading of Chapter 28 show us how God really feels about the so called “Prosperity Gospel” which preaches that we can name it and claim it including money, homes and great jobs, fancy clothes, and cars “in Jesus’ name!”?**

**ANSWER:** Please read Chapter 28:12-17 and see that the Lord told Jeremiah to tell Hananiah that he was a fake prophet who did not tell the people the truth and used a false gospel of prosperity and blessings without any word of the Lord to back up what he said.

**6. Which verses show us how Hananiah used the tactics of theatrics and gimmicks to prove to the people that his prophecies were true and came from the Lord?**

**ANSWER:** Read Jeremiah 28:5-11 and see that Hananiah used theatrics when he dramatically took the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah to give the false impression that he was showing them what God would do for Jews in Babylon. He was using props to support the lies he was telling and to back up his false prophecies!

**7. After reading Chapters 28 and 29, how do you feel about Jeremiah 29:11 now and how would you explain to other Christians that the text doesn’t mean what they make think?**

**ANSWER:** This text is not about individual prosperity or opportunity but about God’s assurance to his chosen people he would take care of them after their punishment and restoration was done!

**8. After reading and understanding better Jeremiah Chapter 28 and 29, can you think of a time when you confused God’s plans with your desires?**

**ANSWER:** When I wanted to be the national President and CEO of the NAACP!