

I. Intro

- a. Awhile back, I had made a comment during a message I was giving that in my short time speaking here, I have spoken on the weeks before and after Christmas, spoken on Palm Sunday, I believe even Father's Day. The only holiday left was Mother's Day. Well, it would appear that now that has come to fruition.
- b. And while it seems as if there is a built in sermon with holidays such as today, since we are in the middle of this series we are going to press on and continue in our study of Jeremiah 29:11 and what it means to prosper.
- c. But I did want to at least say a little something concerning mothers.
- d. It was the comedian Milton Berle who said, "If evolution really works, how come mothers only have two hands?"
 - i. It truly is amazing when you stop and just watch a mother at work.
 - ii. I have shared with you all before that I went to Moody Bridal Institute where it would seem that the vast majority meet their spouses and get married after, if not before, graduation.
 - iii. I am now at the point where a lot of my friends are now having babies.
 - iv. No offense to any of them, I wouldn't be in any better of a spot, but I look at them and I'm like "really? You are having a kid? 2 years ago you couldn't cook anything but ramen noodles and you were running through the dorms causing all sorts of mischief. You're gonna be a parent?"
 - v. I mean, I guess when you are younger you think parents have all the answers and are well prepared in how to be a parent.
 - vi. I have learned quickly thru my friends that there is no such natural preparation.
 - vii. You do the best with what you have and you get advice from the best places you can, which is why it is important to know what the Scriptures teach so you can train up your child in the way he should go, otherwise if you do it on your own, you will undoubtedly lead your child astray.
 - viii. But I say all this because my brother and sister-in-law had a get together with some friends and I stopped by to say hey.

- ix. Well, there were about 6 babies at the party. And it was just neat to be on the outside, kinda like the proverbial fly on the wall just taking the moment in.
- x. Each mother and father had their own system and to see the differences was neat.
- xi. But there is just something about a mother's relationship with her child that stands out.
- xii. But this quote came to mind as I watched moms with their toddlers, helping them walk, making sure they didn't get run over by the big dogs, keeping them out of the water, making them a plate of food to eat while trying to get a bite in themselves and it continues what they were able to do.
- xiii. And the amazing thing was they did it with ease.
- xiv. I mean, we all know it isn't easy, it's exhausting just talking about it but mother's seem to make it appear easy and natural, perhaps why they get taken for granted.
- e. In Proverbs 31 we read of the "Noble Woman." Proverbs 31:10, 26-30 *An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels...She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying: "Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.*
- f. So I did want to at least acknowledge the mothers here today as dealing with children is a tiresome task yet being a mother is a never-ending responsibility.
- g. I think the key to being a successful mother, as well as wife or woman or man or husband, insert any role you want, is the fear of the Lord.
- h. Ecclesiastes 12:13 *The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.*
- i. As we will see today, the fear of the Lord has a lot to do with our prosperity and the peace that we hope to obtain.

II. Transition

- a. So, that being said, let's get into this infamous third week.
- b. As I've mentioned in the Bible studies, as I prepared this series, my heart and passion was with the teaching that we will see today and then again next week.

- c. The reason for this is that it deals directly with how we are living our lives today.
- d. This past Tuesday we had bible study at Jake and Shelby's and we were talking about having the whole context in view when studying a passage and Brad made a comment about how he would go to a Bible study and they would read a passage and then ask "So how does this verse relate to you today?"
- e. Now, there is nothing wrong with asking this question.
- f. In fact, it is a great question to ask, one that *should* be asked.
- g. The problem is there isn't enough context or studying done in order to give a proper, well-examined answer.
- h. This is what we have been doing the past two weeks leading up to this message.
- i. We have been looking at how to properly study a passage of Scripture, particularly from the Old Testament, in order to answer the question of how this passage relates to us today.
- j. We use our prophetic telescope and study accordingly, not skipping steps just because we may not enjoy the work it takes or because we find it boring.
- k. So, let's go ahead and get our verse up there so we have it in our minds.
- l. Jeremiah 29:11 *'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.*
- m. And once again, I continue to use the NIV as it is the translation we tend to hear or see stitched on throw pillows.
- n. But we will remember the word translated prosper in Hebrew is Shalom meaning peace, welfare, well-being, unimpaired relationship with God and others.
- o. It does not carry with it the meaning our word prosperity implies, that of financial well-being, thriving.
- p. We are seeing that God views prosperity in a different light than we do.
- q. This has huge ramifications as to how this verse should impact our lives when we understand this and that is what we are going to take a look at today.
- r. Today, we are going to see how the future tribulation of Israel, the 70th week of Daniel which is the antitype, the fulfillment of the type set forth in the Babylonian Exile, how it relates to the Church in general.
- s. Next week, I believe, we will actually get into taking what we learn today and making it a bit more personal.

- III. Re-cap Historical Context
 - a. When we first began this series, we took a look at our verse Jeremiah 29:11 and examined it in its literal, historical context.
 - b. We learned of the Babylonian Exile and how Nebuchadnezzar and the nation of Babylon took Israel to their land and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem.
 - c. From the historical context, we learned a few things:
 - i. The nation of Israel was living in sin and disobedient and were unrepentant.
 - ii. God, out of his love, used Nebuchadnezzar and the nation of Babylon to bring about His will, which is the repentance of Israel.
 - iii. The nation of Israel living in a land that is not their own until the time has come for them to be brought back out of exile into their inheritance.
 - iv. There are numerous prophets prophesying a message of prosperity in the midst of exile in contrast to Jeremiah who was prophesying the exile of the nation if they would not repent.
 - 1. They were distracting the people of Israel from the very reason they were in exile.
 - 2. God sent them into exile because of their unrepentant hearts, they no longer were seeking him.
 - 3. The popular and widespread message was not a message of repentance and accountability rather a message of health and wealth.
 - v. Those taken into exile, a part of the whole, are saved out of exile.
 - vi. At the end of the Exile, Nebuchadnezzar and the nation of Babylon were judged for their poor treatment of Israel.
 - d. This is the context for our verse on prosperity.
 - e. As we began to see the context and what Jeremiah was describing, it became a little more evident that maybe good fortune and wealth wasn't the original intent of the verse, but perhaps it was still an application for the Church today, just not the primary meaning then.
- IV. Re-cap Prophetic Context for the Future of Israel
 - a. Last week we examined this verse in Jeremiah as it is to be understood in terms of the future of Israel.
 - b. We saw how the story of the Babylonian Exile is a type of the future 7 years of tribulation for the nation of Israel.

- c. We studied Daniel 9:24-27 where we saw God has set forth a certain amount of time, at the end of which the nation of Israel, after enduring enormous amounts of persecution, would have a remnant that returned whole-heartedly to God with repentant hearts.
- d. At the conclusion of this tribulation and when Israel returns to God, God will anoint the holy of holies in the new temple and will dwell amongst His people.
- e. From the events of the Babylonian Exile, we see the following types that will come to pass in the future of Israel:
 - i. Israel will be living in sin and unrepentant.
 - 1. As we saw with the Seventy “Sevens” of Daniel, God views his dealing with Israel as a continuous flow.
 - 2. Israel rejected the Messiah at the end of the 69th week when they crucified Him.
 - 3. In God’s eyes, even though for us it is yet future, the tribulation, the final “seven”, the 70th seven follows the crucifixion of Christ, there is no gap in time.
 - 4. They rejected Him due to their unrepentant hearts and as such, God then disciplines His children until they return to Him
 - ii. God, out of His love will allow the Antichrist and the Gentile nations to persecute Israel and disperse them among the nations.
 - 1. He does this in order to bring about the repentance of Israel, so they will return to Him.
 - iii. As we just noted, the nation of Israel will be dispersed among the gentile nations, in exile out of their own land.
 - 1. They will not return to the land of their forefathers until they have repented as a nation and God brings them back to enter their inheritance.
 - iv. There will no doubt be false teachers who distract the nation of Israel from returning to God.
 - 1. They will urge the nation of Israel to not rely on God but to sign a peace treaty with the Antichrist.
 - v. Only a remnant of the nation of Israel will return to God as two-thirds will be killed during the tribulation.
 - vi. At the end of the tribulation, the Antichrist and the Gentile Nations will be punished for their treatment of Israel.
- f. As we then studied how the Exile is a type for the future tribulation of Israel, it became even more clearer that prosperity

in the eye of God has little to nothing to do with one's financial state rather it has everything to do with his spiritual state.

V. Transition

- a. The time has finally arrived for us to look out to the end of our prophetic telescope.
- b. We have seen the context and now we need to take it a step further and see what this verse means for the Church.
- c. We are going to look at a few of the same main pictures that we have been noting all along and then see how they are similar to the experiences we find ourselves in.
- d. So, without further adieu, let's get started.

VI. Context of this verse as it relates to the Church

a. We at times live in our sin and are unrepentant.

- i. Romans 2:3-10 *But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: ⁷to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life (life lasting an age); ⁸but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. ⁹There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, ¹⁰but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*
- ii. First, we see that it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance as a father wanting his children to succeed, so God's kindness has made our salvation possible and it is his kindness that draws us toward Him.
- iii. But as humans we seem to be caught up in this battle of passing judgment on others.
- iv. We are told that those who are stubborn and unrepentant and who continue to judge others despite knowing that they too will be judged, these people are actually storing up wrath for themselves on the day of judgment.

- v. God will give to his servants what they are due, according to his deeds. Those who are stubborn and unrepentant are just hurting themselves in the future.
- vi. Repent now, do not be filled with selfish ambition, but obey righteousness because it is these who will receive glory, honor and yes, you guessed it, peace.
- vii. This is the greek word "Eirene" meaning a state of national tranquility, peace between individuals, security, safety, prosperity.
- viii. Those who are not stubborn or unrepentant, those who humble themselves before God, it is these who will be prosperous, these who will find peace.

b. God, out of His love, disciplines us through various means in order to bring about our sanctification, to make us mature believers.

- i. But we see, just as the exiles had Nebuchadnezzar oppressing them, we have Satan who is attempting to get us to forfeit our inheritance so he will be able to maintain rulership.
 1. In Matthew 4, we read of the temptation of Christ. Satan offers Jesus rulership over the earth.
 2. We read in Mt 4:8-10 *Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"*
 3. Some read this passage and are confused and say this is illogical, as Satan could not even grant Christ what he is offering.
 4. But the truth is that this was very much in Satan's hands to give. He is the prince of darkness and ruler of this world in this age.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- b. Satan is the god of this age and he is blinding believers, aliens in this land, from seeing the truth of the gospel of the glory of Christ.
 - c. Interesting that it doesn't say he is blinding them concerning the gospel of Grace. Just something to think about.
 - 5. But this was a legitimate offer.
 - a. If Christ had bowed down (we wont get into the question of if it was possible for Christ to bow down) but if He had then Satan would remain god of this world because Christ would have forfeited His right to the inheritance.
 - b. So, we see Satan doing the same thing to us today, as we just read in 2 Corinthians.
 - c. He is veiling the eyes of believers to get us to bow our knee to him so we don't have to endure the suffering and we can get right to the "prospering."
 - ii. To take this back to our context of the Babylonian Exile, let's see how this relates to the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
 - iii. In Daniel 3 we read the story which most are familiar with.
 - iv. Nebuchadnezzar builds a statue of himself and orders all the exiles to bow down to it and worship it.
 - v. These three refuse and when brought before the king, they tell the king this in Daniel 3:17-18 *"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸"But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."*
 - 1. Talk about faith. Talk about prospering.
 - 2. Here are three men who at this point in life are whole-heartedly and completely seeking the face of God, even in the face of death.
 - 3. This is what it looks like to prosper.
 - 4. To stand in front of a furious king and to be filled with peace because you know your God is in control.

5. A few months back I read a story of a group of missionaries in Haiti who were charged with kidnapping kids as they tried to take them to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic.
6. Apparently they didn't have all the necessary paperwork required to take kids across the border.
7. The lady in charge of this ministry was questioned before the hearing and she said, "*We expect that God's will will be done and we will be released*"
 - a. Now, compare that with the response of these three men.
 - b. They tell the king that their God is big enough to save them, but even if He chooses not to, His will will be done and they will not serve other gods.
 - c. This lady starts out stating she expects God's will will be done but then she goes on to apparently state what the will of God is for her, namely the release of her and her fellow missionaries.
 - d. There is no possibility in her mind that the will of God is to perhaps go to prison.
8. My question is, what if it would be more beneficial for this lady to remain in prison.
 - a. Who knows why. Only God does. But she isn't even open to that possibility.
 - b. She expects God wants to prosper her, she has hope that God has a hope and future for her and that future doesn't include prison.
 - c. This happens all the time.
 - d. We think because we are doing mission work or are "in the ministry" that that is God's will.
 - e. What if His will is for you to NOT be in such-and-such a ministry?
 - f. What if it is to put more time and effort into your marriage or your children or whatever other role God has given to you?
 - g. We will get into that a bit more next week.
 - h. But can we see how this verse is taken out of context daily by the actions and words of believers all over?

- i. Prospering does not mean we will go through life without suffering.
 - j. Prospering deals with maturing as a child of God in the midst of difficult situations.
- c. **We are aliens in this world as our home is in the heavens and one day Christ will return and take us out of this world to our inheritance in the heavens.**
 - i. Exile-Living in this world at this time for the purpose of turning entirely to God and living lives of obedience to the Spirit, not disobedience.
 - ii. The people of Israel are examples of Christians
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 10:11 *Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction*
 - 2. The way Israel acts and responds is oftentimes the same way we as believers respond and we are told that they were an example for us so that we may not do the same thing as they have done.
 - iii. We are aliens in this world just as the exiles were foreigners in Babylon
 - 1. 1 Peter 2:9-12 *⁹But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹²Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*
 - a. Just as Israel is a chosen nation, the Church is a chosen race, a people for God's own possession.
 - b. Peter refers to believers as "aliens and strangers" because he realizes that this age is not our time to shine. Living in this world at this time is not where we are destined to

- rule. Our home country so to speak is in the heavenly city in the coming age.
- c. And as such, we are to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.
 - i. This could be any of those things that our flesh enjoys that goes against the Scriptures. You know what lusts you have that you battle with daily.
 - ii. Peter says quit it. Plain and simple. Just don't do it. Don't give in.
 - iii. Don't live by the flesh but keep your behavior pure and by doing so you as well as others will glorify God on the day when Christ returns for the judgment of believers.
2. Hebrews 11:13 *All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.*
- a. Describing the "Heroes of Faith" in Hebrews, the writer says that each person he just wrote concerning died before realizing their inheritance.
 - b. They knew God was faithful and they lived their life on this world knowing that they would receive their promise in the age to come.
 - c. But we read that they confessed that they were strangers and EXILES on the earth.
 - d. We are exiles on this earth, just as Israel was exiled into Babylon.
- iv. It's interesting, Christ does not pray that we be removed from this world, rather in John 17:15-17, we see what He asks God.
1. *I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*
 2. We are to remain in this world, as exiles, until the time is right when Christ returns.

3. And while we wait for his return, we are to not be of the world but we are to be sanctified in the truth.
4. The word is truth.
 - a. John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
 - b. Simply put, while we are in exile in this world, we are to be sanctified by the truth and the word is truth and the word is Christ. We are to be in the Word, that is where we will be sanctified.
 - c. Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*
 - d. Paul urges the church in Romans to be living sacrifices and he says do this by not conforming to this world.
 - e. He is saying to be transformed, endure the process of sanctification by renewing your mind.
 - f. Well, how do you suppose one renews his mind?
 - i. To me, it seems as if there is only one way: being sanctified in the truth. The word is truth.
 - ii. Our minds are renewed by being in the Word of God and allowing the Spirit to work within us, producing in us a good, healthy fruit salad so to speak.
 - iii. You know what a good fruit salad is, made from what we read in Galatians 5-those fruits of the Spirit-love, joy, peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

- iv. Are you filled with these characteristics, or are you still in the midst of the war with the lusts of the flesh?
 - v. Odds are you are still waging war, we will until the day we die. But keep fighting, stay in the Word and renew your mind daily so that you are not conformed to this world that we are foreigners in.
 - vi. And if you do, the fruit will be evident, even though we are not perfect, we will bear fruit that comes from whatever is inside us, good, ripe fruit or bad fruit that can't even be eaten.
- v. So we are exiles in this land and we see that as such, we are to be sanctified in truth while we await the time we return home.
1. Just as Israel would not leave the exile until they had turned their whole hearts to God, we are to be turning our whole hearts to God in this age.
 - a. We will recall Jeremiah 17:10 *I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.*
 - b. This is what is happening in this age. The Spirit is going through the land, searching for the Bride of Christ, those who are making themselves ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb.
 - c. Rev 19:7-8 *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*
- d. The vast majority of our church leaders are preaching a message that has been diluted and is politically correct. There is little to no call for accountability or repentance- those that do, it is for initial salvation.**
- i. Just as Hannaniah in the days of Jeremiah prophesied the end of Nebuchadnezzar and the return of Israel to their

land within two years, distracting them from God's intended purpose for the Exile, we too have false teachers today who distract us from what we should be doing to prepare ourselves for our return to our land.

ii. *2 Peter 2:1-3* ¹*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ²Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

1. We are told false teachers will exist.
2. It should not be a surprise or shocking to us.
3. But we must be aware so that we will recognize the lies they teach so we do not follow them.
4. They do not speak heresies intentionally; at least I think the majority of false teachers don't.
5. But nevertheless, due to a lack of thorough study, a lack of understanding, teachers will speak destructive heresies.
6. Verse 6 reads "Many will follow their sensuality."
 - a. The people will follow in the teacher's carnal ways and the truth of the Word will be misconstrued all over.

e. **(Remnant will be saved)**

- i. Just as in Jeremiah's vision there was a basket of good figs and a basket of bad figs which he is told represent the nation of Israel and how a remnant will repent and turn back to God and be saved while others will continue in their stubborn ways, well the same is true for us.
- ii. *Matthew 22:14* *Many are called but few are chosen (called out)*
- iii. We've seen this verse before, we understand that many have confessed faith in the blood of Christ, many have accepted the free gift of salvation that God offers.
- iv. But the vast majority do not realize that eternal salvation is not the beginning and the end.
- v. Many do not realize that there is more to this Christian life.

- vi. While many have been called, while many have been saved eternally, few will be called out and as we saw in Revelation earlier, few will have made themselves ready with fine linen which is the righteous acts of the saints, those done in faith knowing that an inheritance is at stake.
- vii. *Matthew 7:13 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.*
- viii. Once we are saved eternally, the path is still wide.
- ix. We can continue to walk in our flesh and walk where we please.
- x. Or we can walk on the narrow path which is a path where we put our flesh to death.
- xi. We do not allow the distractions of this world to lead us astray.
- xii. Hence why the path is narrow, it is living by the Word of God which reveals to us exactly how we are to walk.
- xiii. *Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*
- xiv. God isn't trying to make things difficult for us.
- xv. He just tells us to seek and if we do then we will find.
- xvi. The Word of God reveals to us all we need to know as we continue to walk by faith and let it guide us on the narrow path.

VII. Conclusion

- a. So, as we conclude, I want to encourage all of us to seek the prosperity of God, to seek the peace He wants for us as we are but exiles in this land waiting to be called out to the land of our inheritance, if we should be found faithful, bearing good fruit.
- b. And today, we examined how our verse in Jeremiah is to be properly understood and related to the Church and consequently us today.
- c. But next week we will actually take a look at what this looks like in our day-to-day lives as we flesh this out a bit.
- d. We will see how we are to live this out, what that looks like as we live our lives in this 21st century, what we should be pursuing in the midst of the chaos of this world.