



FOREVER CHANGE MY UNDERSTANDING

Part 2: Jeremiah 29:11

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When you're studying the Bible, it's important to consider the following contexts:

Immediate context (*who is talking and who are they talking to?*)

Language context (*what did it say in the original?*)

Grammatical context (*how is it said?*)

Historical/Cultural context (*what historical and cultural influences are important?*)

Theological context (*how does this verse fit into the whole Bible?*)

Proof-texting is: a method by which a person appeals to a biblical text to prove or justify a theological position without regard for the context of the passage they are citing.

An example of proof-texting:

So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. – Matthew 27:5

Go and do likewise. – Luke 10:37

Jesus said... "What you are about to do, do quickly." – John 13:27

Incorrect Conclusion: The Bible wants me to commit suicide

A beautiful verse often used out of context:

"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

For the record:

I am not trying to steal your favorite verse.

I want to make it even more precious to you.

Incorrect assumptions from Jeremiah 29:11:

- 1) This is God's plan for me
- 2) God's plan is that I will never be harmed
- 3) God's plan is that I will be prosperous
- 4) God's plan is being fulfilled right now

Context Matters

1) The people who were reading this were living in exile and life was hard.

2) What God said before the promise:

“Build houses, and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” – Jeremiah 29:4-7

Principle: Live the life you are in right now and live it well.

3) Then God said:

“Do not let the prophets and the diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them...” – Jeremiah 29:8-9

Principle: In the middle of tough times, don't be led astray by false promises.

4) Then God said:

“When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. “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 29:10-11

Principle: It might take a while, but God will keep his promise.

The captivating truth of Jeremiah 29:11

Regardless of your placement, live the lives that God has for you because — in his time — God will break our exile and save us.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What's your favorite Bible verse?
- 2) Have you ever been quoted out of context? What happened?
- 3) Think about the small statement, “I love you.” How can context change the meaning of that statement? Can you think of examples?
- 4) Read Psalm 23. Go back through the list of contexts at the top of the outline and answer those questions. Does your new knowledge change what the Psalm means to you?
- 5) Does Jeremiah 29:11 mean something different to you now that you know what Jeremiah 29:1-10 says?
- 6) What do you need prayer for today?