



Leader Guide

God's Way is Better

May 28, 2023

Main Passage: Jeremiah 29:1-14

Theological Theme

The Jewish people expected to live in or around Jerusalem as God's chosen people but because of their own rebellious choices, many were taken into captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah wrote to them from Jerusalem and encouraged them that God had a plan even in their captivity and God's plans are always best.

Introduction

- ❓ When have you had a GPS incident that challenged your expectations of the right route?
- ❓ How does it make you feel to see the "rerouting" message? When was a time you were thankful you trusted the GPS?

1. Unmet Expectations (Jeremiah 29:1-4)

These first few verses of chapter 29 set the stage for what was happening with the Jewish people. It is important to know the context and background of those who were being addressed. Jeremiah was God's prophet to the people at this time in history around 600 BC.

- ❓ What does the context of this situation tell you about what the people might have hoped for or expected for themselves and from God?
- ❓ When have you found yourself in an unexpected place? How was this a result of you ignoring/rebelling against God's GPS?
- ❓ Application: How do you relate to the situation of the Jewish people in exile? When have you found yourself in an undesirable place experiencing confusion and concern?

2. How to Live in the Now (Jeremiah 29:5-9)

God knew His people had questions and struggled with their new reality in Babylon, so He gave Jeremiah instructions about how they should live. They were in the place that God dictated due to Judah's rebellion. Notice back in verse 4, God said He was the one who led them to this place. After generations of ignoring God and living as they chose, it was time to face the consequences. According to God's plan, they would be in Babylon for quite a while, so He instructed them to settle in and make the best of their time there.

- ❓ When have you felt forgotten or overlooked by God? How have you been reminded of His care for you in difficult circumstances?
- ❓ Why should you look for ways to be a blessing even in places you don't want to be?
- ❓ Application: How can you apply what God said to the Jews in Babylon to your own life?

3. God's Promise and Plan (Jeremiah 29:10-14)

The exile in Babylon was part of God's plan and He already had an end in mind. Although it may not have been exactly what they wanted to hear, Jeremiah told the people their captivity would not last longer than seventy years. Imagine how that news landed on its hearers: It could be comforting to know that there was an end to this season appointed already, but it might be also disheartening to think about how long seventy years can feel.

- ❓ How do you think the people felt in getting the news of the seventy-year timeline? How would you have felt?
- ❓ How have you heard Jeremiah 29:11 referenced in the past? How does knowing the context surrounding this verse change the way you understand it?
- ❓ Application: How can you apply what you learned from this passage and the promises of God about your current situation? Your future?

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).