

Jeremiah 29:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Analysis

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. This beloved verse offers profound assurance of God sovereign purpose and benevolent intention toward His people. The Hebrew word for thoughts encompasses plans, purposes, and intentions—not mere idle contemplation but deliberate divine design.

The phrase I know emphasizes God intimate, certain knowledge of His own purposes. Unlike human plans that may fail or change, God thoughts are established, purposeful, and will come to fruition. Thoughts of peace reveals God intentions—peace means wholeness, wellbeing, prosperity, and restoration, contrasting with evil meaning calamity or harm.

The phrase expected end translates as hope and a future—confident expectation, not wishful thinking, referring to the final outcome. God promises not just temporary relief but ultimate restoration and hope.

Critically, this verse was spoken to exiles facing 70 years of captivity. God plans for peace did not mean immediate deliverance but promised eventual restoration. The fulfillment required patient endurance through hardship—vital context often overlooked when this verse is applied to personal circumstances.

Historical Context

Jeremiah delivered this prophecy around 597 BCE, after Nebuchadnezzar first deportation of Judah leaders to Babylon. The prophet sent a letter to the exiles who had been torn from their homeland, watching Jerusalem from afar while false prophets promised quick return.

The exiles faced profound theological crisis. How could they be God chosen people yet suffer defeat and exile? Had God abandoned His covenant? False prophets promised return within two years, feeding false hope.

Into this despair, Jeremiah delivered shocking counsel: build houses, plant gardens, marry in Babylon, and seek the peace of the city where God had sent them. The exile was not divine abandonment but divine purpose—refining, teaching dependence, and preparing for restoration.

The 70-year timeframe was specific and verifiable. Those hearing this message would likely die in exile. God good plans did not mean immediate comfort but called for faith in promises they would not personally see fulfilled. This tested whether they loved God purposes more than their own comfort.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that Jeremiah 29:11 was spoken to exiles facing 70 years of captivity change how we apply this verse?
2. What is the difference between God plans for peace and our human desire for immediate comfort?
3. How can we distinguish between false hope and genuine biblical hope rooted in God character?

4. In what ways might God good plans require enduring hardship rather than immediate deliverance?
5. How does this verse challenge or comfort us when facing circumstances that seem contrary to God goodness?

Interlinear Text

חַשְׁבֹּה	אֲנִי	אֲשֶׁר	מַחְשְׁבֹת	אֶת	יְדַעְתִּי	אֲנִי	כִּי
	H595	H834	H4284	H853	H3045	H595	H3588
			the thoughts		For I know		
וְלֹא	שְׁלוֹם	מַחְשְׁבֹת	יְהוָה	נֹאמַר	עָלֶיךָ		
	H3808	H4284	H3068	H5002	H5921		
			the LORD	toward you saith			
			the thoughts				
וְתִקְוָה:	אַחֲרֵי	יָתֵךְ	לְךָ	לְתֵת	לְרָעָה		
	H8615	H319	H0	H5414	H7451		
	you an expected	end		to give	and not of evil		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 33:11 (References Lord): The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Micah 4:12 (References Lord): But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

Psalms 40:5 (References Lord): Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Job 23:13 (Parallel theme): But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

Lamentations 3:26 (References Lord): It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

Hosea 3:5 (References Lord): Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Zechariah 1:6 (References Lord): But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

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