**God’s Plans for Your Life**

**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 hope.”* This verse is often (and unfortunately) linked to 1:5, *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you…”* to support the encouraging and beloved notion that God has specific plans and purposes for “my” life.

May I kindly suggest that Jesus Christ is indeed King, but *Context* is the Supreme Court that determines the meanings and appropriate applications of the Law! So, let’s consider the *context* of Jer.29:11…

* Despite modern *interpretations* and *applications* of Jer.29:11, it was not even written concerning Jeremiah, let alone you or me.
* It *was* written to ***captive Judah***living as ***exiles***(because of sin) **in Babylon** during the **seventh and sixth centuries B.C.** (roughly between 605 and 535 B.C.), vv.1,4.
* God was telling ***them*** that *they* (as both a *nation* and as *His people*) **would not *end there****,* but would (after the prophesied 70 years of captivity) **be returned to *Palestine*,** vv.5-10.
* God’s ***purpose for them***was for them to *repent* and thus be *preserved as a remnant* from which *the Messiah* would come, vv.12-15.
* Thus, **neither Jeremiah nor *you, me,* or *anyone living now***is the focus of this passage, except as the recipients of salvation through Him.
* It has nothing to do with “my life” or God’s “purposes” for it *materially, matrimonially, financially,* or *vocationally!*

**Does God “Have Plans” for “My” Life?**

Yes, but probably not the ones you may have in mind. Consider what *His Word* says regarding this:

* Luke 7:30, God’s *purpose* for the *Pharisees and lawyers* was that they should *listen to* and *obey His prophet* (in this case, *John the Baptist*) to *repent* and *be baptized* for *the remission of their sins,* cf.v.29; 3:2-3. Do we really think His *purposes for us* are any different? God’s *purpose* for “my life” is that I *repent* of “living for me” and be *born again* to “live for Him.”
* 2Cor.5:1-9, God’s *purposes* for “my life” is that although my *earthly tent* will be *burdened* and ultimately *torn down,* I *groan* and *long for* my *mortality* to be *swallowed up* by *immortality,* and thus, *live by faith* rather than *by sight* in *seeking* and *doing* what is *pleasing to Him* (rather than *me*)! God’s *purpose* for “my life” is that I use it knowing that it determines my *eternal destiny,* cf. v.10.
* 1Thess.4:7, God’s *purpose* for “my life” is not *impurity,* but *sanctification* (which means *dedicated* to *His* purposes rather than *mine*), cf. 1Tim.4:7; 2Tim.1:9.
* 1Pet.2:19-24, God’s *purpose* for “my life” is to *bear up when suffering unjustly* and *continue faithfully* despite *persecution,* cf. 3:9; 4:1,6.

While I’m quite certain that these are NOT the *purposes* most folks assume or desire that God has for “my life,” they are the ones He specifies in His Word!

**Dangers of “God’s Plan for My Life” Thinking:**

1. **It seeks to make *me* and *my life* “special,”** and thus can become a cover or justification for selfish pursuits; (“You arespecial- just like *everyone* else!”)
	1. *Selfish ambitions* are never going to be “God’s plan or purpose” for your life, Phil.1:17; 3:18-19; Jas.3:14-16.
	2. What makes your life *special* is your *belonging to Christ* and your dedication to *His purposes* and *goals* rather than your own, 1Pet.2:9-10!
2. **It provides a *spiritual* “purpose” to ordinary/material things,** such as careers, hobbies, etc. apart from man’s *real* purpose of following and serving Christ;
	1. God did single-out specific people, even from the womb, for specific *purposes* He had for their lives- Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Paul, *e.g.*
	2. But, if you think about it (and I hope you will), didn’t each of these *special cases* include inspiration and revelation of God’s Word to others rather than career paths, or even areas of otherwise temporal purposes or service? cp.1Cor.13:8-12
3. **It ignores or minimizes the distinct possibility, if not the probability, that your *purpose* in life may include physical *hardship* and *persecution.***
	1. Jeremiah was *beaten, jailed,* and *starved,* Jer.37:11-21; John the Baptist was *jailed* and *beheaded,* Matt.14:3-12;and Paul was *lashed, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, given a “thorn in the flesh,”* and ultimately *killed,* cf. 2Cor.11:24 – 12:8 🡪 12:9-10**because of God’s *plans* for their lives.**
	2. But when people today speak of “God’s plan for my life,” it never includes such things, cf.1Pet.2:19-24; 3:9; 4:1,6.
4. **Makes God to have “purposed” and “predestined” parts of lives that remain entirely up to us.**  It matter no difference to God whether you’re a *employee* or an *employer, married* or *single,* a *parent* or *childless,* a *slave* or *free, illiterate* or *highly educated,* as long as you *keep His commandments,* 1Cor.7:19ff. Simply put: The *physical things of your life* don’t matter- but the *spiritual ones* matter to eternity, cp. Luke 16:10-13,19-31

**Conclusions:**

1. **It is entirely right and proper to *seek God’s will* both *in* and *for* your life- both *generally* and *specifically!*** So, *pray* about it, *read* about it, and *endeavor to obey* it.
2. **But don’t *arbitrarily* and *unilaterally* “decide” what God’s *purpose* is for your life apart from His *revealed will!*** Such is a *selfish perversion* and *co-opting* of “His will” for your purposes.
3. **Instead, concern yourself with God’s purpose for *your salvation,* Heb.6:9; 12:1-2.**