

## Discussion Questions To Dig Deeper

Over the past 2–3 weeks, our focus in our Sunday sermon series has been “finding hope in God’s promises.” It’s likely that most everyone who trusts in Christ as their Lord and Savior would say that their hope is centered on the Lord, but it’s spiritually healthy and helpful for us to do a personal analysis of how the secular shift of our society affects our faith, hope, and love. Feelings of anxiety, worry and fear are on the increase and I sincerely believe that it’s more important than ever for us to review and recognize God’s promises on a regular basis.

### **Some Quotes to Grab Our Attention**

—“Faith in the Lord doesn’t make life easier, but it helps us remember that God’s plans are always better than ours.” —**a T-shirt slogan**

—“*God’s Word regularly reminds us that we are accountable to Him and He doesn’t answer to us. Simply stated, He will always keep His promises, and it’s always essential for us to understand the context and content of His promise!*” —**GAD**

—“Jeremiah 29:11 has been a source of great hope and inspiration for those struggling; however, what is the context of the verse? Is this really a word of encouragement for God’s Hand in prospering us? A cherry picked Scripture, applied in the wrong way and out of context, can mislead people and, in some ways, also misrepresent God or what He can do through people in difficult times.”

—**Pastor Paul Lawler of Memphis, TN**

—“*Deception may be one of the greatest threats to the Church today, but it is nothing new. For over 3000 years people have willingly participated in false teaching leading to idolatry. They don’t throw God out of their worship. Instead, they treat Him like He was one of many gods. Many churches and pastors have departed from sound doctrine. This isn’t just another trend. It is a spirit of deception taking hold of our culture. For all the deception going on today, we cannot spend our time chasing down every rumor. Our time is better spent focusing on the solution, and that is Jesus Christ.*” —**David Jeremiah**

—“The silence in many churches today about what’s happening in Israel is leaving people asking: “Where is the hope? And if there’s anything people need today, it’s hope. We are immersed in a culture of violence, deceit, and death. Anti-Semitic rants have become commonplace on our streets and on many college campuses causing many to fear for their lives.” —**Jonathan Brentner**

## —Some Questions for Personal Reflection & Discussion—

—**1}** Please look carefully at Genesis 12:1–3. Abram (later Abraham) was called by God to become the father of the nation of Israel. These three verses provide a huge promise from God; one that relates to both Jewish people & Gentiles. There are several aspects within this promise and it’s fulfillment is still being carried out. An accurate view of history proves that Jewish people have been the most persecuted people of all time. How does what God promised to Abraham relate to us? (Hint: there are several accurate applications we should identify in this!)

—**2}** *Now please turn in your Bible to Deuteronomy 29:14–30:10. We can summarize other similar biblical passages that teach how Israel is God’s chosen vessel that leads to Jesus being the promised Savior. But we also find that God warned them about falling prey to idol worship and how that would lead to judgment/captivity/loss of privileges. Why is it important for us to understand that along with the warnings to Israel, God also stated that eventually they would be restored to a place of privilege? What does this teach us about God? What does this tell us about God’s grace, and about God’s justice system? What steps should we take to avoid becoming too rigid or judgmental—or becoming too merciful, to the point of compromising or condoning actions that are wrong, harmful, or dangerous?*

—**3}** Drawing our attention to Jeremiah 29:10–14 (you can read more of the context of this passage if you want to dig deeper), what do these verses teach us about the way God keeps His promises to bless and also to discipline or correct us? What does this demonstrate about God’s character?

—**4}** *These four statements were used in the introduction to the sermon notes:*

—*Fulfilled prophecy proves the Bible to be true & trustworthy.*

—*Prophecy motivates holiness, promotes obedience, & builds our faith.*

—*Prophecy is a source for hope, comfort, & encouragement.*

—*Prophecy is designed to prepare us, not to scare us!*

*What personal thoughts, perceptions, & perspectives do you have regarding these ideas? Why are they relevant to the depth of our faith and the extent of our ability to hope in what God has promised to us?*