

Like the Apostle Paul, all God's children **KNOW, UNDERSTAND, FEEL, and LIVE WITH** the reality of **WHO** and **WHAT** they are - **SINNERS** – "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*"(Rom.7:18,19) Knowing this to be the case, we **OFTEN** write hard things against ourselves, thinking poor thoughts of ourselves. In **Ps.40:17a**, King David declared the same concerning himself - "*But I am poor and needy.*" But thank God David didn't stop with **HIS THOUGHTS OF HIMSELF** - "***YET THE LORD THINKETH UPON ME: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, my God.***" Think about what this means to those of us who know ourselves to be sinful, evil, and vile, totally unworthy in ourselves of **ANYTHING** but the unmitigated wrath of God? Isn't this exactly what David was declaring of himself? "***I AM POOR AND NEEDY***" The word "*poor*" means 'weak, afflicted, wretched'. The word "*needy*" means 'needing help, deliverance from trouble, especially as delivered by God'. So King David, who by earthly standards was wealthy above all his peers, lacking nothing in worldly goods, says of himself and **ALL SINNERS**, especially those chosen by God - "*I am weak, afflicted, wretched, needing help, i.e., deliverance from trouble, and **NONE CAN DELIVER ME but God.***" **But here's the part that is so comforting to me:** In this state of **HELPLESSNESS** and **UTTER NEEDINESS**, God given faith caused David to boldly declare: "*Yet the **LORD THINKETH upon me.***" This word "*thinketh*" is an interesting word. In the original it means 'to think highly of or to **ESTEEM**'. Keep in mind, this Psalm is a Messianic Psalm, meaning it speaks first and foremost of Christ in the execution of His Messianic office as Prophet, Priest, and King. So Christ, though He was "*stricken and smitten of God*", and though we **DID NOT ESTEEM** Him, Christ declares that the Father "*esteemed or thought highly of Him as He fulfilled all righteousness*". But what is said of Christ as our Substitute and Surety, can be said just as truly of **ALL THOSE HE REPRESENTED** - "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*"(II Cor.8:9) Though "*poor and needy*" in ourselves, yet "***IN CHRIST***" we are **ESTEEMED** and **HELD IN HIGH REGARD** by the true and living God - "*As He is, so are we **IN THIS WORLD.***"(I John 4:17) With that as a backdrop, I want us to look at **ONE VERSE** this morning - "*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.***"(Jer.29:11)

First of all, I would bring to our attention **WHOSE** "*thoughts*" we have brought before our eyes in this text. When it comes to the matter of "*the glory of God*", self-righteous, religious sinners always begin with the sinner and work backwards to God. But in reality, in this all important matter of **SALVATION**, all of it **BEGINS** with God, **CENTERS** in God, and **SEES ITS COMPLETION** in the Lord. Listen to the Apostle John's words in **Rev.4:11** - "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: **for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.***" There is no doubt that there are many things man, and even

angels, cannot delve into or understand - Moses declared - "*The secret* [things belong] *unto the LORD our God*". **But thank God the Holy Spirit didn't allow Moses to stop there:** "*but those* [things which are] *revealed* [belong] *unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*" (Deut.29:29) In order to understand how important this is to us as believers (justified saints) we have to keep in mind WHO Jeremiah declares has these "*thoughts*" - "**SAITH THE LORD**". **WORDS MEAN EVERYTHING**, especially when we are talking about the Word of God. The word "*lord*" is used throughout the Old Testament. Many times, you'll notice it is with a capital "L" with the rest of the letters in lower case - "**Lord**" - Let me give you just one example - "*And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.*" (Gen.18:2) This word "**Lord**" as used by Moses is *Adonay*, which means 'master, king, or ruler of one's household'. But in the passage we are looking at, it is in **CAPITAL LETTERS**, and it is the Hebrew word **Y^ehovah - yeh-ho-vaw'** which means '**THE SELF-EXISTING ONE**'. When we talk about the use of this word we are on **HOLY GROUND**. This word is a reference to the Great **THREE-ONE** God, including **FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT**. So the **ONE** who thinks these "*thoughts*" is none other than the true and living God, One possessing and guided by **INFINITE WISDOM** and possessing **INFINITE POWER** - "*For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*" (Ps.135:5,6)

SECONDLY, I would have us consider **WHO** Jehovah has His "*thoughts*" toward - "*For I know the thoughts that I think TOWARD YOU, saith the LORD.*" These words recorded by Jeremiah were directed toward **NATIONAL ISRAEL**, that nation the Lord had chosen out of all the nations to lead, guide, protect, and sustain as a nation of people, the people through whom the Lord had determined to bring Abraham's "**SEED**", **HIS PROMISED DELIVERER** from sin, His "*only begotten Son*", the Lord Jesus Christ - **Turn to Gal.3:6-14**. The Scripture make it clear that **ALL MEN** without exception, including the lost and the saved are the Lord's. The Scripture also tell us that the Lord "*maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*" (Matt.5:45) Paul told those at Mar's Hill - "*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.*" (Acts 17:28) **But here's the reality:** **ONE** group of sinners have **NEVER** been loved by God, nor were they **saved** by Christ's accomplished work of redemption at Calvary - "*And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" (Matt.7:23); "*As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*" (Jn.10:15) **BUT THERE IS ANOTHER GROUP OF SINNERS**, God's elect, who were chosen by God the Father "*in Christ*" before the foundation of the world, **LOVED "in Christ"** from **ALL ETERNITY**, redeemed and justified by Christ at Calvary, and born again in time by God the Holy Spirit. God thinks these "*thoughts*" toward **THEM ALONE**, those the Holy Spirit moved Jeremiah to refer to by the pronoun "**YOU**". So God's "**THOUGHTS**" are toward the "*true Israel of God*", His elect, those who are represented in **TYPE** or **PICTURE** by God's dealings with national Israel. **Let me say this and we'll move one:** The same Jeremiah who recorded the words we're looking at this morning, in Jer.31:3 wrote this concerning God's **CHOSEN** - "*The LORD hath appeared*

of old unto me, saying, Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.**"

THIRDLY, I would have us consider the "**THOUGHTS**" God "**thinketh**" towards the objects of His love - "**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.**" The word Jeremiah used translated "**thoughts**" means 'device, plan, purpose' or even better, '**the religious beliefs of Christians.**' The word "**think**" that Jeremiah used means to 'device, plan, charge, reckon, **OR IMPUTE**'. It is the **exact same word** David used in **Psalm 32:1** - "**Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD IMPUTETH not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.**" So the Lord by His prophet declares: "I know my device, plan, and purpose that I **IMPUTE TO MY PEOPLE.**" The salvation of God's people is not a mere afterthought or contingency plan God came up with after He saw man's sin and sinfulness. Before there was ever a sinner in Adam, there was already a Surety and Substitute in the person of Christ, and all God's elect were chosen unto salvation in Him - "**But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.**"(II Thess.2:13) "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**"(Eph.1:3-6)

With that said, let me quickly give you **THREE THOUGHTS** that Jehovah thinks toward His people. **God's FIRST thought** toward His people are thoughts of "**PEACE**". The word Jeremiah used is the Hebrew word "SHALOM", which means 'completeness or soundness'. God cannot just declare "**peace**" with sinners indiscriminately, not even based on His love. In order for there to be "**peace with God**", God must be reconciled to the sinner and the sinner must be reconciled to God. This "**peace with God**" came at the expense of God's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ - "**Therefore being justified by faith, we have PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"(Rom.5:1); "**And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.**"(Col.1:20); "**For HE IS OUR PEACE, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**"(Eph.2:14-18) This "**peace**" is a promised peace, accomplished once on the behalf of **ALL GOD'S** elect through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn to **Isa.32:1,2@Vs.17.**

God's SECOND thought toward His people is stated as a **NEGATIVE** - "**NOT of evil**". There is no doubt that all God's redeemed fully know and understand that if God were to enter into judgment with them based on their **BEST OBEDIENCE**, the end result would be eternal condemnation. King David declared - "**If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?**"(Ps.130:3) The words translated in our text, "**and not of evil**", is one word which means 'giving pain, misery, or adversity'. Even though we fully deserve pain, misery, or adversity for our sins, because of our being put in a place of reconciliation or **PEACE** based on Christ's blood and righteousness alone, God will not deal with us according to our sin. Again, King David declared - "**He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.**"(Ps.103:10-12)

One LAST THOUGHT God thinks toward His people - "**To give you an EXPECTED end.**" Since God is at **PEACE** with us, and since HE does not ever think **EVIL** thoughts of us, seeing we are **ONE WITH HIS SON** in the eyes of His law and justice, **THIS IS THE PLANNED AND PURPOSED RESULT**. This phrase is so comforting. The word "**give**" means 'to bestow, or to be put upon one'. The words "**you an expected**" mean '**hope, ground of hope, things hoped for, or OUTCOME**'. And the word "**END**" means '**hinder part or last**'. Let me paraphrase the last part of this verse for you - "**bestowing, or granting, or giving YOU a hope and expectation of all you could ever hope for or desire spiritually.**" Abraham's hope is a perfect illustration of this truth - **Turn to Rom.4:16-23**. Consider this in closing: In our text, **God is the one doing the BESTOWING or GRANTING** - "**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.**" **Salvation for all God's elect is indeed an expected end, free from fear, anxiety, and drama**. My prayer is that the Lord will graciously grant us the faith to enter into and enjoy these blessed promises that have been so freely and richly provided for us through Christ Jesus our Lord.