

Future

"I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a future with hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

Future—The Hebrew word is *aharit*. What is unusual about this word is that it literally means "afterward, backwards or after part." So, how can it be about the future? H.W. Wolff says that the Hebrews concept of time is like a man rowing a boat. He sees where he has been, but the future is toward his back. He backs into the future. It is entirely unknown to him because it is behind him!

This picture has some very powerful theology in it. God must set out course since only He can see "behind" us. We have as our guide what we see, the course we have been following the past. We see the past because we are facing it. The past is in "front" of us. No wonder our history with God is so important. It is not just about where we came from. It is the visible guide for our course into the future. Finally, there is a great connection with the idea that we must trust God's direction and not fear. If we are "backing" into the future, we must trust the guide. We cannot see where we are going, but He can.

There is a tremendous example of this world in a story from Genesis. When Lot and his wife ran from the destruction of Sodom, they were told not to look back. Lot's wife did look back and she saw her future. She died there. Looking back was a choice not to obey the guide who was taking her out of harm's way.

So much of our lives seem to be consumed with plans for our future. We all want to "look ahead" as though we will be able to guide and protect ourselves from what may come. But God says that the real direction of our life should be to the past. The course of our life was set in the past. The victory over the future happened in the past. It is our history with God that gives us peace and confidence.

Back to today. Enjoy the view behind you.