

In our service on Sunday we read in Matthew Ch 2, the record of the Wise Men following the star to find Jesus. In his account detailing the awful events that took place after their visit, Matthew quotes from Jeremiah Ch 31:15

“A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more” v 15



The Babylonians used Ramah, a town north of Jerusalem, as a collection point for the Israeli captives they were about to exile. Rachel, the “mother of Israel”, was buried near there, and she is portrayed as weeping over the exiles. But in verse 16 & 17 the Lord’s voice answers hers, offering hope for their return.

If you get a moment this week take some time to read the whole of Jeremiah 31. It is an epic chapter, with huge themes like;

- ◆ The faithfulness and discipline of God
- ◆ The restoration of Israel and the introduction of a New Covenant
- ◆ Seasons of despair and glorious hope for the future
- ◆ Complete forgiveness and new beginnings
- ◆ The unshakeable loyalty of God to his people



The chapter gives us verses like;

“I have loved you with an everlasting love, I have drawn you with loving kindness” v 3

“He who scatters Israel will gather them, and will watch over his flock like a shepherd” v 10

“I will turn their mourning into gladness, I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow” v 13

“There is hope for your future” v 17

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts” v 33

“I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more” v 34

This chapter encompasses vast swathes of history, and yet is relevant to all generations. It reveals a God who cares deeply for us and brings hope to us all.

**During the service on Sunday I asked a few questions that you may like to discuss.**

Herod was threatened by the news that a new king had been born.

Let's think about some threatening situations that might affect and challenge our responses...

- ◆ A new colleague arrives, very competent and threatens my hopes for promotion!
- ◆ A neighbour is unpleasant and intimidating, threatening my boundaries and privacy!
- ◆ My long-held ministry is being passed to someone new!
- ◆ A beautiful girl/stunning guy joins the youth group and is the centre of attention!

**Have you ever felt threatened? How did you respond?**

We thought about people in very hard and sad situations, and asked "Where is God in all this?" Also, we thought about many of the good things that happen in life and asked the same question. Where is God in all this?

**Have you ever asked God "Where are you" during a difficult season? Did you get any response?**

At some point as he grew up, Jesus would have realised that all his contemporaries had been killed, because Herod had wanted to kill *him*.

**How do you think that may have affected him? How do you think it would affect you?**

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I used the illustration of a jigsaw puzzle in the service. Each of us in a sense, are a jigsaw puzzle in our own right, living among other puzzles, and all part of God's big jigsaw puzzle. Puzzles inside puzzles!! I often think that

**Life is an opportunity to  
work out the puzzle of love!**

And remember,

**God holds all the pieces and sees the finished picture.**

