



K-Ist Lesson

Introduction

We have been learning about the kings and prophets in the southern kingdom of Judah. There were many kings who did what was evil and led the people to worship false gods and idols. However, there were a few kings in Judah who did what was right.

- Who remembers the good kings we've talked about? *Hezekiah and Josiah. Students may say Joash, in which case you may review that he began as a good king but turned away from the Lord after Jehoiada the priest died.*

Refer to Lesson 102 Flip Chart. King Hezekiah prayed to the Lord for help when the Assyrians were surrounding the city of Jerusalem. God answered Hezekiah's prayer and sent his angel to kill so many of the enemy soldiers that they finally had to go home.

Refer to Lesson 104 Flip Chart. Years later, there was another good king, Josiah. He decided to follow the Lord when he was young. Josiah wanted to please God, so he destroyed all the idols in the land, cleaned out the temple, and fixed it up so the people could worship God in the right way again. When the Book of the Law was found and read to Josiah, he showed great sadness over the people's sins. Josiah read the book to the people, and they promised to follow God.

- But guess what happened after Josiah died. Do you think the people still followed God, or do you think they turned back to idol worship? *Allow guesses.*

Sadly, the people did turn back to worshipping idols. Once again, they disobeyed God and followed false gods.

Today, we're going to learn about a man named Jeremiah. He was a prophet to the people of Judah during the reign of five different kings, starting with King Josiah.

Jeremiah Becomes a Prophet

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Jeremiah wrote two books in the Old Testament: Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Jeremiah 1:4–5

Let's find out a bit about Jeremiah. We'll start with Jeremiah chapter 1, verses 4–5. *Read the verses. Have the student bring up the Bible and turn to the sticky note.*

- God told Jeremiah that he consecrated him, or set him apart, to do a special job. When did God consecrate Jeremiah? *Before he was born.*

Before Jeremiah was even born, God knew him and had chosen to give him a special task. Isn't that amazing that God knows us even before we're born?

- God had a plan for Jeremiah's life. What job did God give Jeremiah? What would he be? *A prophet (to the nations).*

As a prophet, Jeremiah would bring God's messages to his people in Judah, and to many other nations! This was a big job, and Jeremiah had some doubts. He was worried that he wouldn't know how to speak well to so many people.

- How many of you would feel nervous or afraid to stand up and speak in front of the whole church on a Sunday morning or in front of your class at school? *Show of hands.*

Part of Jeremiah's job was to warn the people of Judah that God would punish them for their sins. God knew that the people would not like his message and that they would fight against Jeremiah. But God told Jeremiah, "Do not be afraid. I will be with you and give you the right words to say." Isn't it great that whenever God gives us a job, he also helps us do it?

Jeremiah Visits the Potter

Jeremiah obeyed God and spoke the Lord's words to the people. Sometimes God had Jeremiah use different objects to show the people a picture of their sin and to warn them to turn back to God.

God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house where he could watch the potter make something out of pottery clay!

- Show ball of clay/dough. How many of you have ever made something out of clay or play dough, like this? *Show of hands.*

This clay/dough is different from the clay used to make jars and pots in Jeremiah's day, but we can still form it into different shapes.

- Who knows what a potter does? *Allow answers.*

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. A potter works with clay, forming it into usable things like plates, bowls, cups, and jars. Potters use a mix of clay and water on a flat wheel that spins very fast to form the shapes they want. Then they take the clay off the wheel and let it dry for several days. It could be decorated, then baked in a special fireplace called a kiln to make it nice and hard. After that, it could be sold and used in someone's home. *Show an example of a finished piece if you brought it.*

Jeremiah 18:3–4

Let's read what Jeremiah saw and learned at the potter's house. Listen to Jeremiah 18:3–4. *Read the verses.*

- What was the potter doing when Jeremiah got there? *Working at his wheel.*
- What was wrong with the vessel the potter was making? *It was spoiled.*
- What did the potter do with the clay that was spoiled? *Reworked (remade) it into another vessel.*

Use the clay to form an item (plate/bowl) while you explain. The potter started to form his clay into a certain-shaped vessel, like a _____ (whatever you are making). But as he worked on it, the clay got messed up! *Crush a section/side of your creation.* But instead of throwing it away, he just squished it and started over to make it into something else. *Mash your clay into a ball and begin making another item.* When he was finished, he had something different from what he started to make the first time. *Finish making a new item or refer to the finished piece.*

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Jeremiah watched as the potter squished the clay and started over. God told Jeremiah that the people of Judah were like this clay, and God was like the potter. Judah

had been spoiled by sin, and God was warning that he could destroy them like the potter destroyed the first thing he made. If the people continued to do evil—God would have to smash them like the clay and then remake them.

God also told Jeremiah that if people turned away from evil, he would save them. God wanted them to repent, which means to turn away from their sin and turn back to God. But these people were stubborn and would not listen. Their hearts were evil, and they did not care about following God. Even after being warned, they still wanted to follow their own evil ways.

Jeremiah Is Punished

On another day, God told Jeremiah to go to the temple and warn the people again that God was going to bring disaster on them because they would not listen and obey.

While Jeremiah was saying these things, the chief officer in the temple, named Pashhur, came by and heard Jeremiah. Pashhur was the head of the priests who kept order and took care of problems in the temple, much like a security guard. He didn't like what Jeremiah was saying one bit, so he took Jeremiah and beat him! Then Pashhur put Jeremiah in stocks!

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Stocks were used to punish people. They were made of two beams of wood that locked in place to trap a person by the ankles or by their neck and hands. Prisoners were left out in the open for the people to see and make fun of. Poor Jeremiah!

- People often call Jeremiah "the weeping prophet." Weeping means crying. Can you guess why Jeremiah might have been weeping? *Allow guesses.*

Jeremiah cried because the people would not turn back to God. Instead, the people punished Jeremiah because they didn't like being told that they were wrong. Jeremiah knew that God would send a disaster—an enemy would come and capture the people and take them away from their land. All these things made Jeremiah very sad, and he cried and wept over them.

Jeremiah's sadness over sin is a bit like how God feels when we continue to sin. Instead of making God sad, we can please him when we tell him we're sorry for our sin and ask for his help to not do those bad things anymore.



God was the potter; Judah was the clay.