



K-Ist Lesson

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 104 Flip Chart. We learned about a good king named Josiah, who wanted to serve God with his whole heart. When he heard God's words from the Book of the Law, Josiah led the people of Judah to turn from sin and follow God. Sadly, the kings after Josiah were wicked. They led the people away from the Lord again to worship false gods.

- ? Refer to Lesson 105 Flip Chart. God sent prophets to tell the people to turn back to him. We learned about one of these prophets in the last lesson. What was his name? *Jeremiah.*
- ? When God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house, what was the potter doing? *He was making a vessel out of clay.*
- ? What did the potter do with the clay that got messed up? *He squashed it and started over.*

God said the people of Judah were like the messed-up clay that the potter squashed and remade into something new. They needed to turn away from their sin and turn back to God, so God would not have to send a disaster to destroy them. But the people didn't listen to Jeremiah's message. They punished him instead.

We talked about how the potter worked with clay. It's soft and squishy, and you can make things out of it. But today, we're going to talk about something else that's soft and squishy—only it was a real problem for Jeremiah.

- ? How many of you have ever been stuck in the mud? *Show of hands.*
- ? What is mud? *Dirt and water mixed together.*
- ? What kinds of things could get stuck in the mud? *Allow answers. Rocks, toys, real cars, people.*

Show the bowl of pudding. In this bowl, I have some "mud"—pudding. Set the bowl on a low table. Stir the

pudding with the large spoon. I'm going to give each of you a cookie. Reach up as high as you can over the bowl and let the cookie drop. Let's see if the cookies sink into the pudding like mud. Have students wipe hands or use sanitizer then take turns dropping a sandwich cookie into the bowl from as high as they can reach. You may want them to stand on a step stool for some added height. After each student has had a turn, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside then continue with the lesson.

- ? Is the pudding like mud; did our cookies sink? How is mud different? *Allow discussion.*

Real mud can be a big problem. If it's deep, things can sink down in and get stuck, and it can be very hard to get them out. Let's find out why the mud was such a problem for Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's Troubles

Remember how evil kings ruled for many years after the good King Josiah? It was during that time when God finally brought an enemy king named Nebuchadnezzar to attack the kingdom of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. He captured two of Judah's bad kings and took them away. Then he chose Zedekiah to be the last king—as long as he obeyed King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Bible tells us that King Zedekiah did many evil things, and the priests and the people turned away from God, too. They even brought their idol worship into God's holy temple! But that's not all; Zedekiah also turned against King Nebuchadnezzar and thought he could get away with disobeying the Babylonian king. Jeremiah warned the people that the Babylonians would attack the city of Jerusalem and burn it down.

The people didn't like hearing that they were going to be destroyed. But instead of listening to Jeremiah's message and turning back to God, they were mean to Jeremiah.

Once when Jeremiah tried to go visit his family outside the city, the guard at the gate stopped him and said, "Hey! You're going to join the Babylonians."

"No, I'm not," Jeremiah replied. "That's a lie! I'm not joining the enemy."

But the guard grabbed Jeremiah and took him to the officials. They were so angry with Jeremiah that they beat him and put him in

prison. After many days, King Zedekiah had Jeremiah brought out of prison. But later when Jeremiah spoke about God's warnings again, the king told his officials they could punish Jeremiah however they wanted to.

Jeremiah 38:6

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's look in the book of Jeremiah to find out what they did. Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note. Listen to Jeremiah 38:6. Read the verse.

- ? Where did they cast Jeremiah? Into a what? *Into a cistern.*
- A cistern was a deep pit dug into the ground to catch water when it rained.
- ? Was there water in this cistern? *No, there was no water.*
- ? What was in the cistern? *Only mud.*

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. They let Jeremiah down with ropes into the deep pit. Poor Jeremiah sank down in the mud. He was stuck!

- ? What do you think would happen to Jeremiah now? *Allow guesses.*

King Zedekiah had a servant named Ebed-melech, who was from the country of Ethiopia. When Ebed-melech heard that Jeremiah had been thrown into the cistern, he went to see the king.

Jeremiah 38:9–10

Let's find out if he helped Jeremiah. Listen to Jeremiah 38:9. Read the verse.

- ? What did Ebed-melech tell the king would happen to Jeremiah? He would die of what? *He would die of hunger.*

At this time, the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the Babylonian army. They had come to capture the city just as Jeremiah said. No one inside the city walls could get food or clothes or extra water. And now all the bread was gone.

Do you think King Zedekiah did anything to help Jeremiah? Listen to the next verse. Read verse 10.

The king did help. He gave his servant permission to rescue Jeremiah from the pit. God used Ebed-melech to save Jeremiah's life!

Ebed-melech grabbed some ropes and old clothes and rags and hurried to the cistern where Jeremiah was waiting at the bottom,

sunk down in the mud. "Jeremiah!" he shouted into the pit. "Put these rags under your arms and wrap the rope around you."

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Jeremiah did what Ebed-melech told him. Soon he could feel himself being pulled and tugged by the 30 men outside of the hole. Up, up he went—all the way to the top. I'm sure Jeremiah was glad to get out of there!

God's Judgment

So, Jeremiah was saved from the muddy pit, but the Babylonians still had the city surrounded. There would be no escape from God's judgment!

King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army attacked the city of Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that they came in and killed many people— young and old.

They broke into the temple of the Lord and stole all the beautiful treasures. Then they set fire to the temple and the king's palace! And they broke down the wall around the city that used to keep the people safe. Finally, many of the people who didn't die were taken away— far from their homes—to Babylon.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. This was a terrible punishment! The Babylonian army was cruel. Remember, God is just, so he must punish sin. God was using the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah because they would not turn from their sins and come back to God.

Jeremiah 39:12

What about Jeremiah? He was in the city when all this happened! Was he killed or taken away? Listen to Jeremiah 39:12 for the answer. Read the verse.

- ? What did King Nebuchadnezzar tell his captain to do with Jeremiah? *Look after him well and do him no harm.*

Wow! God used King Nebuchadnezzar to protect Jeremiah so he would live through the judgment of Judah. Even though the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, God made sure Jeremiah was safe.

Later, Jeremiah even got to choose if he wanted to go with the people to Babylon or stay with those left in Judah. A few of the poorest people were left behind to farm the land for the Babylonians. Jeremiah decided to stay with them, and he faithfully spoke God's messages to the end of his life.

JEREMIAH
was cast into
a cistern.



God **PUNISHED**
Judah for their **SIN**.