

## Lesson 105

# God Warns Judah

God promised to judge Judah for their idolatry.

# Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

## Introduction

We have been studying the kings and prophets in the southern kingdom of Judah. There were 20 kings who ruled over Judah, starting with King Solomon's son Rehoboam. Sadly, there were many kings in Judah who did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and led the people in the worship of false gods, which is idolatry. However, there were a few kings in Judah who did what was right.

Who remembers some of the good kings we have studied? Allow answers. 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.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 102 Theme Poster. King Hezekiah was the thirteenth king of Judah. He cried out to the Lord when the Assyrians were surrounding Jerusalem. God rewarded

Hezekiah's faith and sent his angel to defeat the Assyrians.

Refer to Lesson 104 Theme Poster. Then we learned about Josiah, the sixteenth king of Judah. As a young man, he determined to follow the Lord. He cleansed the land of idolatry and repaired the temple so the people could worship God and offer sacrifices again. Josiah was grieved when he heard the Book of the Law and realized the sin the people were committing by breaking God's laws. He and the people of Judah promised to follow God. But after Josiah's death, the people quickly turned back to idolatry under the reign of kings who did evil.

Today, we'll look at the life of a prophet who began his ministry during the reign of godly King Josiah and continued through the reign of the next four kings of Judah. The prophet's name was Jeremiah!

## **God Calls Jeremiah**

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. He wrote two books in the Old Testament: Jeremiah and Lamentations, which are both in the major prophets section. Turn to Jeremiah in your Bibles now.

Slide #5

Slide #6

## Slide #7

### Jeremiah 1:4–9

Who will read Jeremiah 1:4–9? Assign readers.

Jeremiah was a priest living in a town called Anathoth, three miles north of Jerusalem. Remember, Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah with the king's house and God's temple.

In verse 5, what job had the Lord appointed to Jeremiah before he was even born? Prophet to the nations.

Wow! Isn't that neat how God had a special calling for Jeremiah before he was even born? What was Jeremiah worried about when he heard he was called to be a prophet? He didn't know how to speak; he was a youth.

Jeremiah didn't think he could be a prophet because he wasn't confident in his speaking ability and he thought he was too young. When God called him during Josiah's reign, Jeremiah was between 20 and 25 years old. In his day, older adults were more respected than younger people.

But God promised him something in verse 8. What was it? God would be with him to deliver him.

God told Jeremiah not to be afraid of the people because he wouldn't be going alone—God would be with him! God never gives us a task and then leaves us on our own.

He helps us obey!

What did the Lord do in verse 9? He touched Jeremiah's mouth, giving him the words to say.

God also told Jeremiah that the people of the land, including the kings and priests, would fight against Jeremiah because they wouldn't like his message.

After this, Jeremiah obeyed the Lord. He went where God told him to and spoke the words God gave him. His messages to the people pointed out their sins, which included idolatry, injustice, slander, stealing, and unkindness toward the poor and needy.

The people felt like they could keep sinning and God wouldn't punish them because his temple was in their city. They thought they could disobey God's commands, show up at the temple and offer sacrifices to God, and then God wouldn't punish them. But God wasn't pleased with their offerings; he wanted them to be sorry for their sins and change their ways. Just like the people of Israel, the people of Judah refused to turn from their sins. Jeremiah had to warn the people that God's judgment was coming!

Slide #8

Let's start the Class Notes.

Pass out the Class Notes.

You will fill in the blanks using the words at the bottom of the page. Who will read #1 about Jeremiah's calling? Choose a reader. Prophet. Have students complete #1.

## **Jeremiah Visits the Potter**

Sometimes Jeremiah spoke in public places, like the temple, and other times he called the leaders and priests to hear his message from God at a specific place. In addition to speaking to the people, God also had Jeremiah use different objects to show the people their sin and to warn them to repent.

Prepare clay or dough. Optional: Have a completed object of clay/dough hidden nearby.

One object God used was pottery clay! Show ball of clay/dough. This clay/dough is not like the clay used to make jars and pots and other dishes in Jeremiah's day, but I can still mold it into different shapes and items.

Who knows what a potter does? Allow answers.

A potter is a skilled worker who forms soft clay into usable things like plates, bowls, cups, jars, and other vessels. Potters use the right mixture of clay and water on a

flat, horizontal wheel that spins very fast to form the shapes they want. Then they take the clay off the wheel and let it dry, usually for several days. Then the vessel is baked in a special fireplace called a kiln to harden it even more. After that, the vessel could be sold or used.

God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house and he would speak to him there.

Slide #9

Slide #10

Jeremiah 18:3-6

Let's read what Jeremiah saw and learned from his visit to the potter. Turn to Jeremiah 18. Who will read verses 3-4? Assign a reader.

What was the potter doing when Jeremiah arrived? Working at his wheel.

What happened to the vessel the potter was making? It was spoiled.

What did the potter do next with the clay? Reworked (remade) it into another vessel as he wanted.

Use the clay to form an item (plate/bowl) while you explain. Try to picture this scene. The potter placed his clay on the wheel and started to form it into a certain vessel, like a \_\_\_\_\_ (whatever you are making). But the vessel got messed up! Crush a section/side of your creation. But, the potter didn't throw the clay away. Instead,

he squished up the clay and started over, making it into a different vessel. Mash your clay into a ball and begin making another item. At the end, the potter had something different than what he started out to make. Finish making a new item and set it down or bring out a completed object and show the class.

Let's see what God said next in verses 5–6. Choose readers.

What did God compare the clay to? The house of Israel.

The house of Israel is referring to Judah in this passage, not the northern kingdom that was destroyed by the Assyrians. So, the clay is a picture of the people in Judah. And who was the potter a picture of? God.

### Slide #11

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. This object lesson was a picture of Judah as the clay and God as the potter. God was saying that he could, at any time, destroy them like the potter did with the first vessel that was spoiled here in the picture. God explained to Jeremiah that if any nation turned from evil, God would spare them from destruction—he wouldn't crush them and remake them into another vessel. But any nation that continued to do evil would not be spared—God would smash them like the clay and then remold them.



## Slide #12

### Jeremiah 18:11–12

Someone read verses 11–12 in Jeremiah 18.  
Choose a reader.

Who did God tell Jeremiah to go speak to?  
Men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem.  
What warning did God give the men of  
Judah and people of Jerusalem? He was  
shaping disaster, devising a plan against  
them.

What did they need to do to avoid the  
coming disaster? Return from their evil way  
and amend their ways and deeds.

God was telling the people to repent, to  
turn from their sins and change their ways.

But what would the people say in response  
to this message? Look in verse 12. They  
won't listen. They want to follow their own  
ways and do their own thing.

The people didn't care about the warning  
that they would be destroyed, crushed like  
the spoiled clay and then remade into  
something different. They wanted to go  
their own way and continue in sin, following  
their evil hearts.

We may look at these people and think,  
"Wow! They aren't very smart to ignore  
God's warning." But deep down, we have  
the same problem. We want to go our own

way and do our own thing. Obedience to God and turning from sin means we have to humble ourselves before him, admit our own sin and evil, and give up our desire to please ourselves.

Slide #13

Slide #14

On your Class Notes, who will read #2? Choose a reader. House. Have students complete #2.

And #3, who will read about the clay? Choose a reader. Spoiled. Complete #3. Who will read and answer #4? Choose a reader. Potter. Complete #4.

How would the people respond to the warning in #5? Choose a reader. Listen. Complete #5.

## **Jeremiah Weeps for His People**

Another day, God told Jeremiah to go to the temple. There, he warned the people that God was going to bring disaster on them because they refused to hear his words.

Slide #15

Jeremiah 20:1–2

Turn to Jeremiah 20. Who will read verses 1–2? Assign a reader.

Who heard Jeremiah prophesying in the temple? Pashhur the priest.

Pashhur was a priest, the chief officer in the temple. He was the head of the priests who kept order and dealt with any problems in the house of the Lord, much like a security guard.

What did Pashhur do to Jeremiah? Beat him and put him in stocks.

This was terrible for Jeremiah! He was being obedient to speak what God told him, and a priest beat him and put him in the stocks as punishment.

Does anyone know what stocks are? Allow answers.

### Slide #16

Show the Illustration. Stocks were an instrument of punishment made of two beams of wood with small openings for a person's wrists, ankles, or neck. The top beam (piece of wood) could be lifted up so the person was positioned in the holes, and then the beam was dropped and locked in place to trap him. In Jeremiah's day, the stocks probably just locked the prisoner's ankles, like you see in the picture.

This was an uncomfortable and public punishment because prisoners were left out in the open for the people to see and make fun of. They weren't locked away in a prison. Jeremiah was placed in stocks close to the temple at a gate. A gate would have

a lot of people passing through who would see the prophet being punished.

This wasn't the only persecution Jeremiah suffered at the hands of his own people. They threatened his life, cursed him, and even put him on trial! In spite of this, Jeremiah continued to speak, but his heart was broken over his people. Jeremiah is even called the "weeping prophet" because he cried over his people. He didn't want them to suffer the terrible disaster, even after they did all kinds of mean things to him.

### Slide #17

#### Jeremiah 13:17

Turn to Jeremiah 13:17. Who will read that? Assign a reader.

What was Jeremiah doing because the people wouldn't listen? Weeping/crying. What would happen to the Lord's flock, the people of Judah? They would be taken captive.

The people were too proud to repent, and this made Jeremiah weep with sadness. He knew that an enemy would come and take the people captive. They would be taken away from their land.

### Slide #18

### Slide #19

#### Jeremiah 14:17-18

Go to the next chapter, Jeremiah 14. Who will read verses 17–18? Assign a reader. Why was Jeremiah crying for the people here? Look at the end of verse 17. They would be shattered with a great wound, with a very grievous blow.

What would happen to people in the fields? They would be pierced by the sword.

What about the people in the city? What would happen to them? The diseases of famine.

The enemy that was coming to Judah would bring the sword and famine. The people would be in danger of death and starvation. We'll read more about this enemy in our next lesson.

What two groups of people does verse 18 say have no knowledge? Prophets and priests.

The prophets and priests were the religious leaders of Judah. They were supposed to know and obey the laws of God. They should have recognized the sin of idolatry in the land and spoken out against it. Instead, there were many false prophets, people who made up their own messages and said they were speaking for God. They had no knowledge of sin and coming judgment. This made Jeremiah sad. He knew time was running out for them to repent. He pleaded

with them to return to the Lord, but they would not.

### Slide #20

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #6 about what Pashhur did to Jeremiah?

Choose a reader. Stocks. Complete #6.

What did Jeremiah do in #7? Choose a reader. Wept. Complete #7.

And the last one, #8. Who was God going to send as punishment on Judah? Choose a reader. Enemy. Complete #8.

## **Application**

### Slide #21

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God had Jeremiah visit the potter's house to warn the people. He showed that the people of Judah were like spoiled clay that needed to be remade into a new vessel. God wanted them to repent of their sin and return to him. Instead, the people punished Jeremiah because they didn't like his message from the Lord.

How would you have felt if you were Jeremiah and these things happened to you? Allow discussion.

Jeremiah sacrificed a lot to obey God's calling to be a prophet. His job wasn't easy, and he was treated badly by the people he was trying to save! But Jeremiah had a soft heart. He wept over the people's

stubbornness and rebellion. He didn't give up or stop preaching.

Do we feel the same way about the people in our family, neighborhood, school, or city? Do we care enough about their sin and the punishment of hell to warn them what will happen if they don't repent? Are we sad when people reject the Lord and reject what Jesus has done to forgive sinners?

It's easy to sit on the sidelines and watch people do their own thing, but that's not what God has called his children to do. We are commanded to be salt and light in the world, which means sharing the bad news about sin and the good news about Jesus. We may meet people who don't like the message of the Bible, but God has promised to be with us just as he was with Jeremiah. And one day, God will reward those who faithfully served him!

## Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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