

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 for help 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. When he was young, Josiah decided to follow the Lord. He destroyed all the idols in the land, cleaned out the temple, and repaired it so that 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. Then when Josiah read the book to the people, they promised to follow God. But after Josiah died, they soon turned back to idol worship.

Today, we're going to learn about the prophet Jeremiah. He began his ministry during King Josiah's reign and continued through the reigns of the next four kings of Judah.

God Calls Jeremiah

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Jeremiah 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

Find chapter 1 and follow along as I read verses 4–5. Read the verses.

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 had chosen to appoint, or assign, a special task to him. Isn't that amazing that God picked Jeremiah for this job even before he was born? God had a specific 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 not only to his own people of Judah, but also to many other nations! This was a big job, and Jeremiah had some doubts. Let's see how he answered God in verse 6. Choose a reader.

What was Jeremiah worried about? What did he say he didn't know how to do? Speak.

Why was he afraid that he might not know how to speak for God? Jeremiah said he was only a what? A youth.

As a young man, Jeremiah felt unsure of himself to speak God's words to so many people.

How many of you would feel nervous or afraid to speak in front of people, like the whole church on a Sunday morning or in front of your class at school? Allow answers.

Let's see what God told Jeremiah in verses 7-9. Follow along as I read. Read the verses.

Part of Jeremiah's job was to warn the people of Judah that God would judge them for their sins. God knew that the people would not like Jeremiah's message and that they would fight against him.

But what did God tell Jeremiah in verse 8? Do not be what? Reread verse 8, if necessary. Afraid of them.

Why should Jeremiah not be afraid?

Because God would be with him.

But how would Jeremiah know what to say?

What did the Lord do to Jeremiah in verse 9? He touched his mouth.

What did the Lord tell him? "I have put my words in your mouth."

God told Jeremiah that he would give him the words to say. When God gives us a job, he will give us the ability to do it.

Jeremiah Visits the Potter

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

Have clay or play dough ready to show.

One object God used was 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 in Jeremiah's day, but we can still mold it into different shapes.

Who knows what a potter does? Allow answers.

Slide #8

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. A potter works with clay, forming it into usable things like plates, bowls, cups, jars, and other vessels. Potters use the right mixture of clay and water on a flat wheel that spins very fast to form the shapes they want. They take the clay off the wheel and let it dry for several days. Then it's baked in a special fireplace called a kiln to harden it even more. After that, the vessel could be sold or used.

Slide #9

Slide #10

Jeremiah 18:3–6

God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house where he would speak to him. 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 was wrong with the vessel the potter was making? It was spoiled.

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

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

Use your clay to form an item (plate/bowl) while you explain. Try to imagine 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). As he was working, 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 another object. Mash your clay into a ball and begin making another item. At the end, the potter had something different from what he started out to make. Finish making a new item or bring out a completed object to show.

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

Who did God say was like the clay in the potter's hand? Who was he talking about? The house of Israel.

In this verse, "the house of Israel" means the Israelites living in the southern kingdom of Judah, not the northern kingdom of Israel. So, the clay is a picture of the people in Judah. And who is the potter a picture of? Who is talking? Reread the last half of verse 6. God; the Lord.

Slide #11

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. This object lesson showed the people of Judah that they were like the clay and God is like the potter. Judah had been spoiled by sin like the vessel had been spoiled. God was saying that he could, at any time, destroy them like the potter did with the first vessel. God explained to Jeremiah that if any nation turned from sin, God would save them—he wouldn't mash them and remake them into another vessel. But any nation that continued to do evil would not be saved—God would smash them like the clay and then remold them.

Slide #12

Jeremiah 18:11–12

Let's see what else God said through Jeremiah. Follow along as I read Jeremiah 18:11. Read the

verse.

God gave Jeremiah a warning to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. What did God say he was shaping, or planning, against the people? Disaster.

Yes. God was going to punish them for their sins. But remember, God told Jeremiah that if people turned away from evil, he would save them. So, at the end of verse 11, what did God tell them they needed to do? Return (to him), turn from their evil ways.

God wanted them to repent, which means to turn away from sin and turn to God.

What do you think the people said when they heard this message? Allow guesses. Who would like to read verse 12 to find out? Choose a reader. What did the people say they would follow instead of God? Their own plans.

These people were stubborn and refused to listen. They did not care about following God. Even after being warned that God would crush them like the potter crushed the spoiled clay vessel, they were more interested in following their own evil ways.

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 listen to his words.

Slide #13

Jeremiah 20:1–2

Turn to Jeremiah 20. As I read verse 1, listen for the name of someone who heard Jeremiah's warning. Read the verse.

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

Pashhur was 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.

You would think that a priest would be glad to hear words from God, right? But listen to verse 2. Who would like to read? Choose a reader.

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

What?! Jeremiah was obeying God. He was speaking God's message in the temple. But the priest punished him by beating him and putting him in the stocks.

Does anyone know what stocks are? Allow answers.

Slide #14

Show the Illustration. Stocks were used to punish people. They were made of two beams of wood with small openings for a person's wrists, ankles, or neck. The top piece could be lifted up so that the person could be positioned in the holes. Then the beam was closed and locked in place to trap him.

Prisoners were left out in the open for the people to see and make fun of. Jeremiah was placed in stocks at a gate near the temple. A lot of people would pass through this gate and see the prophet being punished.

Jeremiah's own people continued to do mean things to him throughout his life because of the messages he shared from God. But Jeremiah did not give up; he continued to warn the people because he cared about them. Jeremiah is often called "the weeping prophet." Weeping means crying. Can you guess why Jeremiah might have been weeping? Allow guesses.

Slide #15

Jeremiah 13:17

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

Jeremiah said he (his soul) would weep if the people would not what? Listen.

And why would his eyes weep bitterly? What would happen to the Lord's flock, the people of Judah? They would be taken captive.

The people were too proud to repent; they didn't want to be told that they were wrong. This made Jeremiah weep with sadness. He knew that an enemy would come and capture the people, and they would be taken away from their land.

Slide #16

Jeremiah 14:17

Go to the next chapter, Jeremiah 14. Follow along as I read verse 17. Read the verse.

Again, Jeremiah was crying for the people. He said that they would be shattered, or destroyed, with what? Look at the end of verse 17. A great wound, a very grievous blow.

Because the people refused to turn from their sins and turn back to God, an enemy was coming to Judah. Jeremiah knew that many of the people would die from the sword and from starvation. Remember Pashhur the priest? He and the other religious leaders should have listened and led the people back to God. But they didn't. All these things made Jeremiah very sad, and he wept over them.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

Let's use the Class Notes now to see how much you remember. You will fill in the blanks using the words at the bottom of the page. Read through the words then allow students to complete the worksheet.

Let's check the answers now. Who will read the first one for us and give the answer?

Choose a student. Prophet.

How about #2? Where did Jeremiah go?

Choose a student. House.

What did the potter do for #3? Choose a student. Spoiled.

What's the answer for #4? Choose a student. Potter.

And #5? Did the people listen? Choose a student. Listen.

What happened to Jeremiah in #6? Choose a student. Stocks.

Who will answer #7? Choose a student. Wept.

And 8? Choose a student. Enemy.

Application

Slide #20

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God told Jeremiah to visit the potter's house. The people of Judah were like the spoiled clay vessel that needed to be remade into a new one. God

wanted them to repent of their sin and turn back to him. Instead, the people punished Jeremiah because they didn't like his message from the Lord.

It's easy for us to think that these people should have known better. Why didn't they follow God instead of going their own way? Allow discussion.

The Bible tells us that all people have gone their own way instead of God's way. That's what sin is—doing what you want instead of what God wants. It's because of sin that we all need to repent—turn from our own ways and turn to God.

Many years after Jeremiah lived, whom did God send to save us from our sins? His Son Jesus!

God calls every person to follow him by repenting and trusting in Jesus. If you haven't done that yet, and you feel like God is calling you, you can trust him today!

God also calls us to keep telling others about him just as Jeremiah did. There are people all around us that don't know about the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and God wants us to tell them. Jeremiah cared so much about the people of Judah that he never stopped preaching God's message. It takes courage to tell others about God, doesn't it? But remember that God will be

with you, just as he was with Jeremiah, and he will give you the words to say.

Lesson Review

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

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