



## Unit 15, Session 3

# Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah

## Jeremiah

**Story Point:** Jeremiah told God's people about a new and better covenant.

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*Open your Bible and read aloud from Jeremiah, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.*

**When Josiah was the king of Judah, God called a priest named Jeremiah to be a prophet.** God told Jeremiah, "I knew you before I made you in your mother's womb. Before you were born, I chose you to do very special things. I chose you to be a prophet to the nations." "Oh no, God!" **Jeremiah said. "I don't know how to speak in front of other people. I'm just a boy, only a youth."**

"Don't say that," **God replied. "You will go where I send you and say what I tell you to say. I am with you. I will protect you."** For many years, Jeremiah spoke God's message to the people of Judah. He reminded them that God had made a covenant with them: **If they obeyed Him, He would bless them. But the people did not obey. Now God had to punish their sin. God said the people would lose their land, their wealth, and their freedom.**

Jeremiah explained that people's hearts trick people into wanting things or doing things that God does not want for them. **The people did not want to listen to Jeremiah, and Jeremiah was sad.** He warned them that God's punishment was coming, but he also said that God had a plan to change His people's hearts. **God promised a new and better covenant**

**so the people could be saved from their sins. God would write His law on people's hearts and give His people power to obey His commands.** God said, "I will forgive their wrongdoing and never remember their sin."

God told Jeremiah to write God's message on a scroll. So **Jeremiah spoke God's words, and his friend Baruch (BAY rook) wrote the words on a scroll.** Baruch read from the scroll so that all the people heard God's words. He warned that the king of Babylon would come and destroy Judah. **King Jehoiakim sent one of his officials to get the scroll. Jehoiakim cut off each part and threw it into the fire until the entire scroll was burned up.**

God told Jeremiah to write another scroll with the same words as the first. Jeremiah told the king, **"God is going to punish you, your family, and your leaders for doing wrong things. God warned you that disaster will come to Judah but you did not listen."**

*Christ Connection: Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus made these words come true. God forgives our sin through His Son, Jesus. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey His commands.*



## INTRODUCE the Story

### WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share something they think they'll be able to do once they're older. Could they do it now? Why or why not?

### OPTION 1: Pass a message

*Supplies: paper, pencils*

Instruct kids to sit in a circle. Assign one kid to be first. Give the second kid and every other kid (fourth, sixth, and so on) a pencil and piece of paper. Whisper a message to the first kid, such as “He threw three free throws” or “Sheep should sleep in a shed.”

The first kid should whisper the message to the second kid, who will write the message and pass it to the third kid. The third kid will read the message and whisper it to the fourth kid. Emphasize that kids may only whisper the message once. Continue around the circle—whispering, writing, passing, and reading—until the message reaches the end of the circle. Ask the last kid to announce the message.

- Did the message change? Why?
- How did God give messages to His people before Jesus was born?

### OPTION 2: New and improved

*Supplies: household products (1 per group), paper, pencils, markers*

Form groups of three or four kids. Distribute paper, pencils, and markers to the groups. Assign each group a different household product. Explain that kids should work together to think of ways the product could be “new and improved.”

Encourage kids to design a poster advertising the better product. After several minutes, call on groups to share their advertisements.

- What made each product new and better?
- Which new product would you like to be able to buy?



## TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Josiah was king when God called a priest named Jeremiah to speak to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

### Read from the Book of Jeremiah.

- What does this story teach us about God?

God called Jeremiah to be a prophet. God promised to be with Jeremiah and to give him the words to say. When **God calls someone to do something, God gives that person everything he or she needs to do God's work.** Also—through the Spirit—**God gives us power to obey His commands,** and God will forgive our sins forever.

- How are we like the people of Judah?

Just like the people of Judah, **we need a heart change so that we can obey and follow God.** We obey God because He loves us, not because we are trying to earn His love. We already have it! God forgives our sin through His Son, Jesus. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey His commands.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

### CHRIST CONNECTION

*Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus made these words come true. God forgives our sin through His Son, Jesus. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey His commands.*



## TEACH the Story

### MISSIONS MOMENT

Jeremiah told God's people about a new and better covenant. As Christians, we can tell people about a better way of life by following Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, we stop going in the direction of sin and self, and we turn to follow Jesus' way. Members of the 10:12 Sports Eagles team in Baltimore are hearing about Jesus, and some are responding by following Him.

### PRAY

Lord, You are good and You have good plans for us. Thank You for Your Word. Help us remember that You do not accept us because we follow Your rules, but You accept us because we trust in Jesus, who obeyed perfectly and died on the cross for our sin. Change our hearts and give us power through Your Spirit to love and obey You. Amen.

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## THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



**GOD RULES.** Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



**WE SINNED.** Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



**GOD PROVIDED.** Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



**JESUS GIVES.** Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



**WE RESPOND.** Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



## APPLY the Story

### Big Picture Question

How did God plan to fix what sin broke?  
Before He created the world, God planned to send the  
Messiah to save sinners.

Jeremiah said that because of sin, people's hearts are tricky. Apart from Jesus, we would not want to do what is right. Jesus gives us new hearts.

- How should you treat someone who is mean to you?
- Have you ever been surprised by someone else's kindness? How?

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Jeremiah 31. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Jeremiah 31:33-34. Remind kids that Jeremiah's message was to stop sinning and turn back to God before it was too late. Jeremiah told God's people about a new and better covenant.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Jeremiah 31:33-34 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

#### 1. What did Jeremiah say would be different about the new covenant?

*Remind kids that in the old covenant, the people had God's commands in writing. They disobeyed His commands and made sacrifices every year for their sin. In the new covenant, God was going to write His law on their hearts. He would give His people the power to obey His commands. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 10:16.)*

#### 2. How does God change our hearts today?

*Guide kids to identify that Jesus came to establish the new covenant. All of us have sinned and, just like the people of Judah, we need a heart change. Only a relationship with God through Jesus Christ changes our hearts and gives us power through the Holy Spirit to obey God's commands. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ezek. 11:19-20.)*

#### 3. Why should we obey God?

*Invite kids to share their ideas. Help them recognize that We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good. We don't have to earn His love. We already have it! (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 2:8-9.)*



## APPLY the Story

### KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

*Supplies: Bibles, paper, markers or crayons*

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Provide paper and markers or crayons. Assign each kid a key word from the key passage and instruct them to draw a picture to represent the word.

Then lead kids to say the key passage, holding up the pictures for the key words. Challenge them to say the key passage from memory, referring to the pictures as prompts. (Sample key words: people, bear/called, pray, face, turn, hear, heaven, heal, land)

### PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, asking God to help kids understand that we are saved not because we follow rules but because we trust in Jesus, who obeyed God perfectly and died on the cross for our sin.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Water on a mission

*Supplies: bottled water, construction paper, yarn or ribbon, scissors, crayons*

Allow time for kids to tell you about different things that they enjoy (dance, cooking, playing with friends, playing with their pets). Distribute bottled water and construction paper. Explain that no matter what kids like to do, they can show people love the way Jesus did. They can show the love of Jesus to coaches, teachers, friends, and family members. This is an important part of missions!

Direct kids to make a simple card from the construction paper to give to someone with the bottled water. They can draw a picture, write a Bible verse, or write a note to a friend. Encourage them to include the words Jesus Loves You on the card.

As kids work, discuss ways that they can use the activity they enjoy to show the love of Jesus. Can they be helpful at home? Do they have a teammate that they can invite to church? Can they help their dance teacher clean up after class? Remind kids that people everywhere need to hear the good news that Jesus saves sinners.