

Bible Stories for Adults

Jeremiah Jeremiah

Opening

Gathering: Does going to church regularly make someone a saved Christian?
If not, then why do we gather every week?

Today's Focus: God sent Jeremiah to once more call His people in Judah to return to faithfulness in Him. His message through Jeremiah was rejected just as it had been through His earlier prophets.

Key Verses: *I have put My words in your mouth.* Jeremiah 1:9

Like clay in the hand of the potter, so you are in My hand. Jeremiah 18:6

Opening Prayer

Lesson

After Hezekiah (*2 Chronicles 33*)

How faithful of a king was Hezekiah?

2 Kings 18:5-6 = Most faithful of all of Judah's kings

How faithful was Hezekiah's son, Manasseh? = Worse than Amorites

2 Chronicles 33:1-6, 9 = Reversed good of father, sacrificed son, defiled temple

How did God decide to deal with this evil rejection?

2 Kings 21:10-13 = Punish Judah as He had Samaria

Why did God allow Manasseh to reign 55 years? = Removed foreign gods when returned

2 Chronicles 33:10-13 = Repented after being taken captive to Babylon, restored to power

How faithful was Manasseh's son, Amon?

2 Chronicles 33:21-22 = Was as evil as his father had been

Why did Amon reign only 2 years?

2 Chronicles 33:23-25 = Assassinated by officials, Son Josiah took over

Josiah (*2 Chronicles 34*)

Was Josiah any more faithful than his father or grandfather? = Even removed altars in Israel (v6)

2 Chronicles 34:2-4, 8 (1-13) = Was faithful, Removed high places, Repaired temple

How extensive was Josiah's clean-up campaign?

2 Kings 23:12-13, 19-20 (1-25) = Purged altars & shrines built by past kings back to Solomon

What especially notable cleansing did Josiah do in the northern territory of Israel?

2 Kings 23:15-16 (15-18) = Destroyed Jeroboam's Bethel temple, Burned priests' bones on altar

Why was this especially notable?

1 Kings 13:1-2 = It fulfilled 200-year old prophecy made to Jeroboam when he built the altar

What was found in the temple during its repairs that showed Judah's faithlessness?

2 Chronicles 34:14, 19, 21, 29-32 (14-33) = Book of the Law, Josiah had read & people pledged

Did Josiah's faithfulness lead God to cancel His plans to punish Judah?

2 Chronicles 34:27-28 = No, but He would wait until after Josiah was gone

Did Josiah's pride ever get ahold of him as it had faithful kings who had preceded him?

2 Chronicles 35:20-23 = Forced battle on king of Egypt who God had sent to fight Assyria, killed

How long did Josiah's reforms last?

2 Kings 23:30, 32 = His son, Jehoahaz, was evil

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God Calls Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 1:1-5*)

- Did God finally give up on these faithless Jews and punish them as He had Samaria?
Jeremiah 1:1-3 = Called Jeremiah during Josiah (100 yrs after Isaiah, 600 before Jesus)
- What had Jeremiah done to be chosen by God to be His prophet?
Jeremiah 1:4-5 = Nothing. God appointed Jeremiah before he was born
- Who else recognized their call into God's service from birth?
Galatians 1:15-16 = Paul was set apart from birth to preach Christ to the Gentiles
- Who else was chosen before birth and predestined to carry out God's plan?
Ephesians 1:11 = We have been

God Equips Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 1:6-19*)

- What was Jeremiah's concern when God called him and how did God respond? = See 1 Timothy 4:12
Jeremiah 1:6-9 = *I'm only a child...I am with you and...put my words in your mouth*
- What did God show Jeremiah to build confidence? = *Almond tree* in Hebrew sounds like *watching*
Jeremiah 1:11-12 = *Almond branch* -> God will watch to make sure His word is fulfilled
- What did God show Jeremiah to explain His plans? = Boiling kettle symbolized war
Jeremiah 1:13-16 = Boiling pot indicating disaster will come from north
- How would Jeremiah be able to present this message to the kings & nations?
Jeremiah 1:10 = God set Jeremiah over nations & kingdoms; both doom & restoration
Jeremiah 1:17-19 = God has made Jeremiah strong. *I am with you and will rescue you*

Jeremiah's Message (*Jeremiah 3-4*)

- How did God summarize the problem to Jeremiah?
Jeremiah 3:6-11 = Judah hadn't learned from faithless Israel and continued unfaithful
- What did God want?
Jeremiah 3:12-13; 4:1-2, 4 = For His people to return to Him and be faithful to Him
- How would God's wrath break out if they continued to reject Him?
Jeremiah 4:5-6 = He would bring disaster and terrible destruction from the north

Security in the Temple (*Jeremiah 7*)

- Where did God send Jeremiah to call the people to return to God?
Jeremiah 7:2-3 = At the gate of the temple
- How did God answer Judah's sense of security from wrath since God's temple was there?
Jeremiah 7:4 = Don't trust in these deceptive words
- The temple was the house that bore God's Name. Wouldn't God protect it for His own sake?
Jeremiah 7:12-15 = No, He would destroy it for their wickedness just as He did Shiloh
Note: Shiloh was where the tabernacle was set up after the Israelites conquered Canaan
- How did Jesus later identify the correct place to worship God?
John 4:19-24 = We are to worship God *in spirit and in truth* - anywhere and everywhere
- How were the people using the temple?
Jeremiah 7:9-11 = Lived sinfully & unfaithfully, then went before God as if everything was okay
- Weren't the people doing right by obeying God's commands to sacrifice and worship?
Jeremiah 7:21-23 = Sacrifices & worship mean nothing without obedience
- Doesn't God consider us to be faithful if we come to church every week and give sacrificial offerings?
Mark 12:33 = No, He wants us to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength

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Call to Return (*Jeremiah 7*)

How then could the people return to God's favor?

Jeremiah 7:5, 7 = Change your ways & actions; you can live here forever

How had the Israelites responded to God's calls to faithfulness in the past?

Jeremiah 7:25-26 = They rejected His prophets and grew more unfaithful

How would the people respond to this message this time?

Jeremiah 7:27-28 = They would not listen to it

What would God do as a result?

Jeremiah 7:20, 33-34 = Bring disaster on Judah & Jerusalem

The Potter and the Clay (*Jeremiah 18*)

What did God do to make sure that Jeremiah understood the message he was sent to give?

Jeremiah 13:1-11 = Gave him object lessons that clarified the message

What object lesson did God show Jeremiah in Chapter 18?

Jeremiah 18:1-4 = Pot became deformed, potter reformed into another pot

What was the message of what Jeremiah saw?

Jeremiah 18:5-6 = God can reform a new Israel from the deformed Israel

Why should Judah repent if God has already decided to destroy it?

Jeremiah 18:7-8 = God would change His plans of wrath if nation repented

But wasn't Judah protected by God's plans and promises for them?

Jeremiah 18:9-10 = God would change His plans of blessing if nation turned evil

Would Judah repent if God warned them of His plans?

Jeremiah 18:11-12, 18 = God sent Jeremiah to warn, but they rejected & attacked him

God's Plans for the Old Pot (*Jeremiah 19*)

Where did God send Jeremiah to announce the impending disaster? = See Jeremiah 7:31

Jeremiah 19:1-3 = Topheth in Valley on Ben Hinnom, where humans were sacrificed to Baal

Note: Potsherd Gate overlooked main dump for broken pottery, Valley south side of Jerusalem

What reasons did Jeremiah give for the disaster?

Jeremiah 19:4-5 = They forsook God and worshipped evil & made-up gods

How severe would this disaster be?

Jeremiah 19:6-9 = Slaughtered by enemies, scorned & mocked by others

Note: Hebrew for *Valley of Hinnom* is *ge' hennom*, *Gehenna* is translated in NT as *hell*

Why did God have Jeremiah bring a clay pot?

Jeremiah 19:10-11 = Smashed the pot to show how Judah would be smashed

Jeremiah's Reception (*Jeremiah 20:1-6*)

Where did Jeremiah go after speaking at Topheth?

Jeremiah 19:14-15 = Temple court to proclaim disaster on Jerusalem

How did the temple officer react to Jeremiah saying this in the temple?

Jeremiah 20:1-2 = Had him arrested, beaten & put in stocks

How did Jeremiah use this to again speak his message?

Jeremiah 20:3-6 = Prophesied destruction and exile to Babylon

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Jeremiah's Response to Rejection (*Jeremiah 20:7-11*)

How did Jeremiah feel about being ridiculed and rejected?

Jeremiah 20:7-8 = He complained to God

Why didn't Jeremiah just stop prophesying?

Jeremiah 20:9 = He was unable to hold in God's word

In what did Jeremiah take comfort? = Just as God had promised when He called Jeremiah

Jeremiah 20:11 = *The Lord is with me like a mighty warrior*

God's New Covenant for the New Pot (*Jeremiah 31*)

From the lesson of the potter (Jeremiah 18), how did God plan to reform Israel?

Jeremiah 31:31-32 = He would make a new covenant with a new Israel

Who is the new Israel, the new children of Abraham?

Galatians 3:7-9 = Those who have faith

How would this new covenant be different?

Jeremiah 31:33-34 = Put law in minds & on hearts, all will know me, I will forgive their sins

What was required to guarantee God's old covenant with Israel?

Hebrews 9:16-18, 20 = Blood

How is God's new covenant with the new Israel guaranteed?

Hebrews 9:14-15, 7:22 = By the shedding of Jesus blood

How are we reminded regularly of this new covenant?

Matthew 26:26-28 = Sharing in the Lord's Supper - *This is my blood of the covenant...*

Hope For The Exiles (*Jeremiah 23*)

By bringing His wrath on Judah through the Babylonians, did God consider Babylon as better than Judah?

Jeremiah 23:1-2 = No, God would punish them for the evil they have done

What would God do for His exiled people?

Jeremiah 23:3-4 = God would gather a remnant and bring them back

Would Judah and Israel ever have a righteous king?

Jeremiah 23:5-6 = *I will raise up to David a righteous Branch*

How important would this restoration be to the new Israel?

Jeremiah 23:7-8 = They would look to God's gathering more than the exodus

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Have I hesitated sharing God's word because I was unsure what to say?
(*Jeremiah 1:6-9; Exodus 4:10-12; Isaiah 51:16; Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:11*)
2. Do I learn from bad examples around me or do I follow them?
(*Jeremiah 3:6-11; 2 Kings 17:15b; 3 John 11; Jude 7*)
3. Do I come to church because I have to?
(*Jeremiah 7; John 4:19-24; Mark 12:33; 1 Samuel 15:22; Isaiah 1:11-13; Hosea 6:6; Amos 4:4-5*)
4. When have I been so excited about what God has done in my life that I couldn't keep myself from telling others about Him? (*Jeremiah 20:7-9; Acts 4:18-20; Ephesians 3:1-13; 1 Peter 3:15*)
5. What defects in my life has God reformed?
(*Jeremiah 18:1-6; Isaiah 64:8; Romans 6:1-4; Ephesians 4:17-32*)