

HAPPY AND RESTORED

FAMILY THEME

Joyfully Hope in God's Promise

STUDY TEXT

Jeremiah 31:1-40

OBJECTIVES

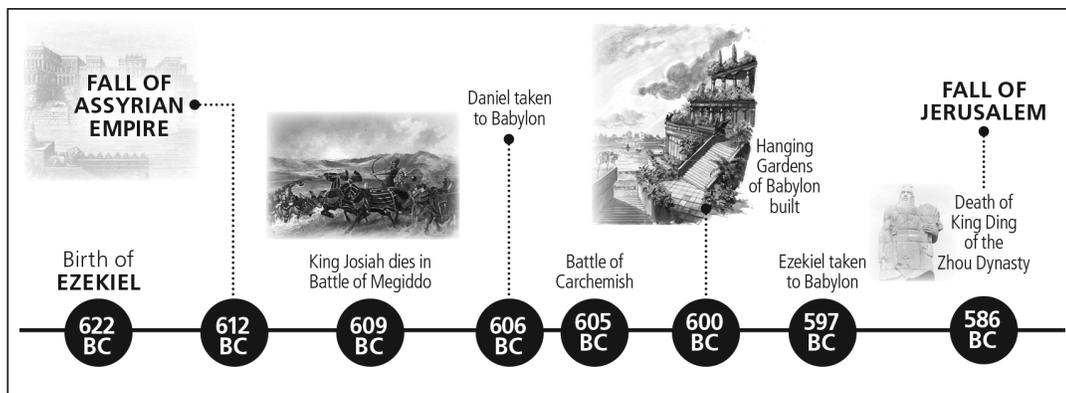
KNOW: God provides forgiveness and renewal for His repentant children.

THINK: I find satisfaction and joy in walking with God.

DO: Repent of all sin and rejoice in God's mercy.

CHECKLIST

- FTE 1-19 (teaching outline)
- FTE 1-20 (student outline)
- FTE 1-21 (talk sheet)
- FTE 1-22 (handout)
- FTE 1-23 (*Home Connection*)



CONNECT



FUSION Teaching Essential 1-19 ("Old Testament Unit Lesson 4: Teaching Outline") provides an outline that can be used as a guide for teaching this lesson. Teaching outlines are also available as editable Word documents. For free download, go to www.d6curriculum.com/fusion. (**Download code: FUTU6147.**)



FTE 1-19

Choose one of the options below to get this lesson started.

Option 1: Write the word *Repent* on the marker board and then ask your group members what they think of when they see the word *Repent*. After some discussion, ask the following:

- *What does it mean to repent?*
- *Why is repentance necessary for the Christian?*

Say: *Today we will see how God would judge His people for their sins, but would also restore His people if they would turn from their sins and walk with Him.*

Option 2: Ask and discuss the following:

- *What does it take to have a close relationship with another person?*
- *What does it take to have a close relationship with God?*

Say: *Today we will see how God wants His people to turn away from all sin so they can walk in a close relationship with Him.*

LEARN



Give everyone in your group a copy of *FUSION Teaching Essential 1-20* (“Happy and Restored”) and something to write with. This outline gives the major points of the lesson and provides space to take notes.



FTE 1-20

Teaching Tip

Ask your group members to share life experiences they have had that relate to topics you are studying in your lessons. Connecting God’s truth to life experience leads to deeper learning and application.

The tragic character of Jeremiah’s prophecies of sure impending judgment and his empathetic response (Jeremiah 9:1) has led many to call him the *weeping prophet*. Nevertheless, God held good news for Jeremiah to share with the sinful people of Israel.

God Will Restore Joy and Peace to His People

(Jeremiah 31:1-14)

In verses 1-14, God spoke to Jeremiah of His plans to restore peace and joy to His people Israel. He addressed the northern kingdom first. This area had already gone into exile 136 years before. Their southern kinsmen rejected them as traitors and half-breeds (the Samaritans of Jesus’ day), but God had good news of restoration for them.

Verses 2-6 speak of building, planting, and making merry. Vineyards in particular denote a time of peace and stability, undisturbed by war or violence. Jeroboam had built golden idols in Israel to keep the people from going to worship in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:25-33). God announced to Jeremiah a time when the people of the north would employ watchmen to remind them of when it was time to go to worship in Jerusalem again. God intended to do more than restore the northern and southern captives—He intended to deal with both parts of the split kingdom. We should pray and work for times of peace and stability in our homes, families, and neighborhoods. We need them in order to thrive and prosper, just as vineyards do.

God's plan to restore included those who ordinarily did not participate in such traveling and building: blind, lame, pregnant, or already in labor. God would indeed bring them back, as a tender father restores a wayward son (verses 7-9).

Verses 10-14 look at the entire earth. The *nations* and *coastlands* frequently indicated Gentiles, people in faraway places. They too had an interest in what God would do to restore Israel. Rejoicing and plenty would mark the new life in Israel. Priests ate a prescribed portion of what the people brought to sacrifice. In the restored Israel, the priests would have plenty to eat.

Teaching Tip

Try to locate the old territories of Ephraim (in the northern kingdom of Israel) on a map, to show what going up to Jerusalem to worship would involve. Point out to the group that going *up* to Jerusalem did not mean going northward, as we commonly think. It means going up in elevation, and especially going up to a place of supreme importance.

EXPLORE

The Bible uses the term *covenant* often enough that we should look at the word more closely. A covenant is an agreement, but a very solemn and important agreement. In Abraham's time, people often marked a formal covenant through the sacrifice of an animal, sliced down the middle, giving rise to the expression *to cut a covenant* with someone. This idea was in play in Genesis 15:7-18 when Abraham cut up the sacrificial animal and waited for God to pass through the two parts indicating the covenant. God's covenant with Abraham promised that Abraham and his descendants would be His people. He promised that through Abraham's seed, He would bless all the peoples of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).

OT Unit: Sharing Truth When No One Listens, Lesson 3 Teaching Outline:
“GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF IT ALL”

DATE: March 15, 2020

STUDY TEXT: Jeremiah 12:1-17

FAMILY THEME: Patiently Trust God's
Sovereignty

CONNECT:

OPTION 1: Write the following phrase on the marker board: *That's not fair!* Then ask your group members to give examples of things or situations they feel are not fair. What is the situation and why is it not fair? What would they do about the situation if they had the power to change it? Say: *Today we will see how Jeremiah asked God why things seemed to go well for the wicked, and how God responded to this question.*

OPTION 2: Ask your group members to give examples of how people sometimes seem to get away with what is evil and wrong. Ask: *How does it make you feel when you see people seeming to get away with wrongdoing? Why is that so frustrating?* Say: *Today we will see how God will make sure that all is eventually made right.*

LEARN:

1. Life May Sometimes Seem Unfair (Jeremiah 12:1-4)

Jeremiah's question was neither new, nor original, nor specific to him. In every age, many have asked the same question: *Why do the wicked seem to prosper?*

APPLY: Trust God when facing injustice and persecution.

- *What are some times when life seems unfair?*
- *Why might God delay making things right?*

2. God Will Judge the Wrongdoing in Our World (Jeremiah 12:5-13)

God described the events as though they had already occurred. God's judgment was certain. Even His own chosen people received no free pass. How much less the pagan nations around them.

APPLY: Remember God is aware of evil and will punish it..

- *Why would God not be God if He failed to bring judgment upon all wrongdoing?*
- *How does the fact that God will punish sin give us hope for the future? How does it give us urgency?*

3. God Offers Forgiveness and Compassion to All Who Will Turn to Him (Jeremiah 12:14-17)

God's judgment would include Jew and Gentile. So would His compassion. God excludes no one who wants to learn His ways and live by His name. He welcomes them.

Pass out the student outline, FTE 1-14.

Display the FTE 1-15 poster to reinforce the principles of this lesson.

Use FTE 1-16 ("Let's Talk About Patiently Trusting God's Sovereignty") for discussion.

Encourage the parents in your group to use *Home Connection* (FTE 1-18) this week.

Encourage your group members to complete this week's devotions in *FUSION* or *FUSIONnext* devotional study guide.

APPLY: Turn from all sin and share the good news with others.

- *How did God demonstrate that He has love and compassion for all people, including those who want nothing to do with Him?*
- *How is it really up to each individual to determine whether or not he or she will enjoy God's blessings or His judgment?*

RESPOND:

OPTION 1: Use FTE 1-17 ("When Life Doesn't Seem Fair") to help your group members think about how we should respond when life doesn't seem fair. Give them time to complete the handout and then discuss it together. Encourage them to take comfort in God's justice and to trust God to make all things right in His perfect timing. Also encourage them to warn unbelievers that God will one day make all things right, but that He loves them and desires for them to be saved.

OPTION 2: Ask and discuss the following:

- *How should we respond when a neighbor or coworker asks us why good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people?*
- *What do we know about God that assures us that all will eventually be made right?*
- *How can we explain that it is not God's fault that good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people?*
- *What "good" person do you know who is going through difficult times and could use your prayers and encouragement? How could you encourage that person this week?*
- *What "bad" person do you know who seems to be prospering, but who needs to know that God will eventually bring judgment on all who do not know and submit to Him? How could you lovingly warn that person this week?*

OPTION 3: Use one or more of the following questions to help your group members think about how to put the truths of this lesson into practice.

- **Life May Sometimes Seem Unfair:** *What are some situations we see around us that seem unfair? How should we respond to such situations?*
- **God Will Judge the Wrongdoing in Our World:** *What are some examples of how evildoers seem to get away with wrongdoing? What does the Bible tell us about how God will handle this issue?*
- **God Offers Forgiveness and Compassion to All Who Will Turn to Him:** *What sin could I more fully confess and set aside knowing God will forgive me and show compassion? With whom could I share this good news this week?*



GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF IT ALL

DATE: March 15, 2020

STUDY TEXT: Jeremiah 12:1-17

FAMILY THEME: Patiently Trust God's Sovereignty

1. Life May Sometimes Seem Unfair (Jeremiah 12:1-4)

Notes:

Application:

2. God Will Judge the Wrongdoing in Our World (Jeremiah 12:5-13)

Notes:

Application:

3. God Offers Forgiveness and Compassion to All Who Will Turn to Him (Jeremiah 12:14-17)

Notes:

Application:

How will I put this into practice this week?



LET'S TALK ABOUT **PATIENTLY TRUSTING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

OT UNIT: SHARING TRUTH WHEN NO ONE LISTENS

LESSON 3: God Will Take Care of It All

DATE: March 15, 2020

STUDY TEXT: Jeremiah 12:1-17

FAMILY THEME: Patiently Trust God's Sovereignty

DISCUSSION LEADER: Use some or all of these questions in class or in an out-of-class discussion group. This essential can also be copied and given to parents to use as a discussion starter at home.

- What is God's sovereignty?
- What does it mean to trust God's sovereignty?
- How does life sometimes seem unfair?
- In what ways does it sometimes seem that good things happen to bad people?
- In what ways does it sometimes seem that bad things happen to good people?
- Why can we trust God when facing injustice, persecution, etc.?
- How does it help us to remember that God is aware of evil and will punish it?
- Why is it important for the lost to turn to God and repent of sin?
- How will God someday make all things right?
- Why does God's coming judgment make it crucial for us to warn people and share the good news of salvation in Christ?
- Whom could you warn of judgment and share the good news of salvation?

When _____
LIFE
is NOT FAIR

What are some situations we face or see around us that do not seem fair?

How do you feel when “bad” people seem to prosper and “good” people seem to struggle?

What do we know from Scripture about how God will deal with these situations?

How should we respond to that knowledge?



Experience true joy by walking in a right relationship with God.

Walking in the ways of God, contrary to popular opinion, is not a joyless exercise in drudgery. It actually leads to joy, peace, and fulfillment. David expressed it so well in the twenty-third psalm: God leads us to good grass, beside the kind of water we need, and He protects us. The wandering sheep is the one who ends up in brambles or in the jaws of predators. Discussion:

- *Why does walking with God in a close, obedient relationship lead to peace and joy? (We were created to know and walk with God; it is where we find true peace and satisfaction. Obeying God keeps us from experiencing the negative consequences of sin, both natural and those that come from discipline or judgment.)*
- *What can we do that will help us walk in this close relationship with God? (Practice habits and disciplines like Bible intake, prayer, fellowship with other believers, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and fill us, using our gifts and abilities to serve God, etc.)*

God Will Accept Our Prayers of Repentance

(Jeremiah 31:15-22)

Rachel (verse 15) was the mother of Joseph, who was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, from whom two of the larger tribes of the northern kingdom would come. Jeremiah brought up the sorrow that the punishment of Israel's and Judah's rebellion against God would have caused their patriarchal ancestors. Rachel's children would soon go into exile. Ramah would indeed be a staging point for the exiles, and Jeremiah himself would spend some time there after Jerusalem's fall.

Yet God had good news, even in the grief of national loss (verses 16-20). God comforted grieving Rachel, and through her, He comforted her children. There would be restoration, and indeed, Israel would return from its exile. God knew their grief. More important, He knew their repentance (verses 18-19). God's love endures, and He will gladly remember His wayward people in mercy (verse 20). Israel and Judah had committed heinous immorality on a national scale. Still, after judgment and repentance, God showered them with mercy and grace.

D6 DOORPOST

The repentance and restoration God would give His people demonstrates how *God offers salvation and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.*

Our sin will make Him seem distant, but He yearns to be able to shower us with mercy and grace as well.

God's restoration is so certain that He instructed Israel to mark the way by which they went out, because that is the way by which they would return. Sadly, the "faithless daughter" would be just as slow to believe God's promise of restoration as she was to believe His promise of judgment (Verses 21-22). The new thing on earth seems to refer to a common proverb of the day whose meaning is no longer clear. Many scholars take it to mean, in general, the weak (Israel's captives) will overpower the strong (their captors). Still, it is unclear.

EXPLORE

What about Rachel weeping in Ramah? Is this a prophecy? Matthew 2:17-18 calls back to this passage in Jeremiah. Ramah was a few miles north of Jerusalem and served as the departure point for many of the exiles headed toward Babylon. Bethlehem was a few miles south of Jerusalem and served as the lightning rod for Herod's paranoid fury after the birth of Jesus. Some scholars see a prophetic reference. Others see a reference that served to evoke, in Matthew's day, the same sense of terrible grief and loss that had taken over in Jeremiah's day. It seems that Jeremiah's phrase became a proverb used through the years whenever Jews wanted to refer to the mistreatment of Jewish children.

APPLY



Repent of all sin and rejoice in God's mercy. Some people keep a "good list" and a "bad list." We may joke about not wanting to get on their bad list, because some people never seem to move anyone off their bad list once they are on there. Not so with God. Our sin has most definitely put us on His bad list, and the consequences are severe. Still, turning to God in faith and repentance changes things. He eagerly moves us to the good list, so to speak, and will overwhelm us with mercy. Discussion:

- *How do these verses demonstrate both God's holiness and His mercy? (His holiness brought judgment; His mercy brought forgiveness and restoration.)*

- *What does it mean to repent?* (A change of mind that leads to a change of behavior; it is turning away from sin to obey and follow God; it results in change.)
-

God Desires to Bless and Live With His People

(Jeremiah 31:23-40)

God had benevolent plans for Israel and Judah, and the remainder of this chapter builds the case. Even though the land would be desolate and Jerusalem demolished, new inhabitants would fill both the land and the city, and thrive there (verses 23-25). Apparently, God delivered this message to Jeremiah via a dream (verse 26). The dream of God's restoration must have been pleasant indeed.

Verses 27-30 use the image of God's filling the land with people and animals as a farmer would fill soil with seed for a rich harvest. God had been working against them; He would however work just as hard for them. In Judah's deportation, the few, the remnant who still followed God, went into exile along with the idolatrous majority. In the coming day, that would never happen.

Verses 31-34 reveal a marvelous new covenant. Israel repeatedly broke the old covenant that God had established following the Exodus from Egypt. In the new covenant, God promised to work within the hearts of His people. External prods and encouragements to obedience would lose importance—people would obey from the heart!

God then appealed to the rhythms and constants of the natural world to highlight His promise and goodwill for His people (verses 35-37). This physical world came from our Lord. The Bible often uses examples from the natural order to underline important points. The rhythm of sun, moon, and stars would wear out long before God's love for Israel came to an end. Measuring the fullness of heaven and earth would not suffice for breaking His steadfast mercy. To make it very clear, God then referred to some of the parts of Jerusalem that would be rebuilt. He even promised to extend the city (verses 38-40).

D6 DOORPOST

God's desire for His people to walk in relationship with Him demonstrates that *He is a personal, spiritual being.*

EXPLORE

What is the importance of the *new covenant* in verses 31-34? First, we should contrast it with the old covenant. The old one was broken (by Israel) many times over hundreds of years. The new one would not rely on external rules and obligations. The new one would find its roots in what had always been the problem—the human heart itself. How would God plant His law within believers under this new covenant? How would He write it on their hearts? He would do it through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Many early Jewish believers found transition from old to new very painful. Yet, the New Testament writers were quite clear that Jesus Christ inaugurated the new covenant of which Jeremiah spoke (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). Passages such as Romans 11:27, and especially Hebrews 8:6-13 and 10:14-18 point out that if the old covenant had been good enough, then God would have had no need to introduce a new one.

APPLY



Walk closely with God in the new covenant written in Christ's blood. The old covenant of Moses' time was sealed in the blood of a multitude of sacrifices and continued over hundreds of years. It could never bring the hope of salvation. That comes only through the new covenant, sealed with the blood of one sacrifice on the cross, the one for the many. God brought Jesus back to life, and this gives us assurance of new life as well. We can now walk with God, with His law in our hearts, and in peace with Him. Discussion:

- *How could the sacrifice of one man suffice for us, who are so many?* (Because Jesus was more than "one man." He was also God in human flesh, living among us. It is not an issue of quantity. It is, and has always been, an issue of quality. The sinless Son of God and Son of Man accomplished what all the blood of all the sacrificial animals in the whole world could never do.)
- *How can we ensure that God's law is written within us?* (We feed our minds upon His Word, the Bible. We ask God to help us develop sensitivity to the Holy Spirit Whom He gives to all who believe. We work to obey in the little things.)

Use *FUSION Teaching Essential 1-21* (“Let’s Talk About Joyfully Hoping in God’s Promise”) as a discussion starter in or out of class. It can also be copied and given to parents to use as a discussion starter at home.



FTE 1-21

RESPOND



Use one or two of the following options to help your group members put the truths of this lesson into practice. Feel free to follow the activities of this section as one larger group, several subgroups, or even individually, depending on the size and disposition of your group.



FTE 1-22

Option 1: Use *FUSION Teaching Essential 1-22* (“Daily Repentance”) to help your group members think about turning away from any sin in their lives and walking closely with God. Let them work on their own to complete the handout and then discuss it together. Encourage them to turn away from any sin that is hindering their relationship with God and to practice the habits or disciplines that will help them walk closely with God.

Encourage the parents in your group to try **Home Connection** (FTE 1-23), a simple, downloadable page that gives parents:

- A weekly Bible passage to **READ** together as a family
- Suggestions to help them **PRAY** together as a family
- Suggested activities to **DO** to put their faith in action



FTE 1-23

Home Connection also provides the theme, Scripture text, and the “take away” from each age level in the D6 Curriculum. This way parents know what each family member is experiencing in his or her church discipleship class. **Home Connection** is available for FREE download at www.D6curriculum.com/home-connection.

Option 2: Use questions such as these to help the group explore the subject of God's law in our hearts:

- *What does it mean that God now writes His law upon our hearts?*
- *What role does the Holy Spirit play in this?*
- *How is this inner motivation more effective than outward lists of do's and don'ts?*
- *What can I do this week to cultivate God's law in my heart?*

Option 3: Use one or more of the following questions to help your group members think about how to put the truths of this lesson into practice.

- **God Will Restore Joy and Peace to His People:** *Why is joy and peace found in walking with God and not in the things of the world? What do I need to do this week in order to walk more closely with God?*
- **God Will Accept Our Prayers of Repentance:** *How is repentance more than merely asking forgiveness of our sins? What could I more fully turn away from in order to be able to walk more closely with God?*
- **God Desires to Bless and Live With His People:** *What could I do this week to help me walk closely with God? How can I allow God to write His law on my heart this week?*

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *FUSION* or *FUSION*next devotional study guide this week to help them apply and respond to this lesson. Encourage parents to go to d6home.com for free resources to help them disciple their children, and to talk with their children this week about the devotions they all are working through in their devotional study guides.

Resources for Defending the Faith

In addition to your pastor and other knowledgeable church leaders, the following websites can be used as resources to gain knowledge in how to respond to questions or objections about our faith.

reasonablefaith.org

carm.org

probe.org

seanmcdowell.org

icr.org

answersingenesis.org

creation.com

creationmoments.com

ratiochristi.org

truelife.org

comereason.org

oneminuteapologist.com

crossexamined.org.

While Randall House may not agree with every view presented on these sites, they are useful resources for defending our faith.

D6 | **DOORPOSTS**

key principles that frame a biblical worldview

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

The Bible is God's Word.

God is a personal, spiritual being.

God created the universe and everything in it.

I am a special creation of God, with an eternal soul.

I am engaged in a spiritual warfare.

Sin brought death and destruction into the world.

Bad things happen because the world is a sinful place.

I cannot save myself; I need a Savior.

God offers salvation and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

The home is the first institution God established to make disciples and transfer the faith.

The church is the second institution God established to make disciples and transfer the faith.

Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Lord of all.