



Mustard Seed Lesson Summary for Sunday, 29 July 2007
Released on Wednesday, July 25, 2007

“Trust God”

MEMORY VERSE:

“I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT: Jeremiah 29:1-14

1 Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

2 (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)

3 By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;

5 Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;

6 Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

7 And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that what God has planned for His people's future is good.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. God has good plans for His people.
2. God's plans are good because He is good.
3. We can be sure the Lord will do the good things He promises.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For the "Helping to Remember" section, for each child, you will need half a sheet of white paper, crayons, glue, and a strip of paper on which is typed the memory verse. A lesson activity is also included at the end of this summary to further help with understanding the lesson.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

The Jerusalem of Jeremiah's day was filled with religious and moral confusion (Jeremiah 5:1; 11:13). The city was under constant danger from foreign invaders (1:15; 6:1). The threat of God's wrath was also against the city (4:4), and the Lord God promised to lay the city in ruins (6:8; 9:11). Jeremiah constantly preached that the future for Jerusalem was dismal (13:16).

During this time, Babylon and Egypt were in conflict for supremacy. Each wanted to rule the ancient world. Therefore, when Judah's king ignored Jeremiah's counsel and sided with Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar retaliated by exiling or transporting thousands of Judah's leaders to Babylon (2 Kings 24).

Jeremiah is often portrayed as a prophet of doom. However, in this week's lesson, after a second group of captives are taken to Babylon, Jeremiah turns his focus from warning the people of Judah to encouraging the exiles in Babylon. Jeremiah shifted his theme from judgment for sin to the future restoration.

TEACHER'S NOTES / TELLING THE LESSON:**1. What does it mean that God's people were "captives" or "exiles" in Babylon?**

"Captives" are people that are made or held prisoner or hostage, especially in times of war. "Exiles" are those people that have been banished or sent away from their native land by force.

Babylonian captives or Babylonian exiles refer to the citizens of Judah, God's chosen people, who were forcibly transported to Babylon after Jerusalem and the country were defeated.

2. Why did Jeremiah write a letter to the captives in Babylon?

When the others were carried away to Babylon, Jeremiah was given the option of going or staying in Judah. He chose to stay but was still used by God as a messenger of encouragement to the exiles. Jeremiah wrote them a letter and sent it by men who were going to Babylon on government business (29:1-3). Jeremiah wanted to encourage the exiles despite the situation they found themselves in.

NOTE: The distance from Jerusalem to ancient Babylon was about 500 miles if you traveled straight across the desert. But following the northern route, through the Babylonian administrative center of Riblah and down the Euphrates River valley, the

distance was more like 880 miles. This was a well-traveled road in Jeremiah's day and would have taken the couriers carrying Jeremiah's letter about six to eight weeks to make the journey.

3. How were God's people to make the best of life in Babylon?

In Jeremiah's letter, he told the people to accept their present situation and not wait for a quick solution and a return to Jerusalem. They needed to understand that Babylon would be their home for many years, so they needed to make the best of it. God still cared for them and wanted them to flourish in Babylon.

God told His people in captivity to build homes and settle down in them. They were to plant gardens and harvest the produce. They were to marry, establish families, and increase in number. They were to live normal lives, be at peace with their captives and pray for them.

4. What warning did Jeremiah give concerning false prophets?

False prophets, such as Hananiah, were declaring that the Lord would very quickly (within two years) restore His people to their homeland (28:1-4). Jeremiah warned the people that God had not sent these false prophets and that the things they prophesied were not true. The people were warned not to believe them. God was telling them that He would bring them back after seventy years, no sooner.

5. What encouragement did Jeremiah give the people about returning to their homeland?

Through Jeremiah's letter, the Lord assured His people that He had good plans for them, not evil ones. Even though they were in a discouraging situation, God wanted the exiles to know that when they repented and returned to Him, in humility and obedience, He would restore them to their homeland.

When the people sought the Lord with their whole heart, He would heed their request. He would bring them back from their captivity. Regardless of where He had scattered them, He would gather them from the nations and return them safely to their land.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

God's letter to you is the Bible. It says He has special plans for you if you are one of His children. They are good plans too, because He is good. You can be sure God will always do just what He says. So believe Him! Trust Him! Make up your mind that you will obey Him and trust Him the rest of your life.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Have the children turn their white paper into the front of an envelope by drawing a stamp at the upper right corner and printing "From God" in the upper left. In the address area, they should print "To God's Children." Then they can glue the memory verse on the back.

Distribute copies of the activities at the end of the lesson to further enhance learning.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11 KJV)

God wanted His people to know that the trouble they were having would not last forever. He was planning to make good things happen for them. That is the way it is today. Because He is a good God, He has good things planned for you.

PRAYER

Father in heaven, we thank You. You are trustworthy, and You always keep your promises. We know that You love us and always want what is best for us. Help us to learn to trust you more. In Jesus' name, amen.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Next week's lesson is "Hope and Wait" from Lamentations 3:25-33, 55-58.

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TRUST GOD (Jeremiah 29:1-14) - Lesson Activity and Word Search

Find the answer to each statement using the King James Version of Jeremiah 29.

1. The prophet sent from Jerusalem (vs. 1)
2. Where the people were taken from (vs. 1)
3. Where the people were taken to (vs. 1)
4. King of Judah (vs. 2)
5. King of Babylon (vs. 3)
6. What the Lord told the people to build (vs. 5)
7. What the Lord told the people to plant (vs. 5)
8. What the people were to pray to the Lord for (vs. 7)
9. They were not to let prophets and these deceive them (vs. 8)
10. Number of years the people would be in Babylon (vs. 10)
11. The Lord describes His word as this (vs. 10)
12. The Lord's thoughts for His people were not this (vs. 11)
13. We should search for the Lord with all of this (vs. 13)
14. The Lord would turn away this (vs. 14)
15. God wants us to do this (from lesson title)

Now find the answers from above in the Word Search.

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