CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JULY2024

Scripture Story: Jeremiah 28:1-15; Jeremiah 29:1-14.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 36.

Israel takes its medicine



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keytext

"This is what the LORD says: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' "

(Jeremiah 29:10, 11, NIV)

flashlight

"To the end of time, men will arise to create confusion and rebellion among those who claim to be representatives of the true God. Those who prophesy lies will encourage men to look upon sin as a light thing. When the terrible results of their evil deeds are made manifest, they will seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them, responsible for their difficulties, even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes. But as surely as the words of Jehovah through His prophet were vindicated anciently, so surely will the certainty of His messages be established today" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 442).

what do you think?

Bad choices lead to unfavorable consequences. As humans, we often seek to find other ways to deal with our situation rather than owning the problem. Which method of denial do you think is most common today? Rank them according to the way you tend to respond. (1 most common, 5 being the least.)

When my actions cause unpleasant circumstances I tend to . . .

____ justify my actions by comparing them to much worse actions of others.
____ minimize what is wrong.
____ avoid the truth by filling the time with busy behavior.
____ consider alternative perspectives.
____ focus on the seemingly judgmental spirit of my oppressors.

did you know?

The men who bear responsibilities in the cause of Christ should be men of prayer and humility. They are to act like men who in all their dealings with their brethren are guided by the Spirit of God. They are to give an example of righteousness."—Ellen G. White, *Christian Leadership*, p. 52

"Hold fast to the truth, the precious, sanctifying truth. You are then in the best of company, and the very highest intelligences are beholding your course of action. You are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men."—Ibid., p. 64

"Living faith will prompt to energetic action. The spirit manifested by the leader will be, to a great extent, reflected by the people."—Ibid., p. 22

INTO THE STORY

"This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

"This is what the LORD . . . , the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.' Yes, this is what the LORD . . . , the God of Israel, says: 'Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,' declares the LORD.

"This is what the LORD says: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,' declares the LORD, 'and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.' "

(Jeremiah 29:1-14, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

As you read this section of Scripture *underline* the parts you think are key. List what you think are the key points in the story and the ideas they convey.

Circle the people mentioned in this passage, and try to identify who they are and their contribution to the story.

Put a *rectangle* around the words or phrases that are repeated in this passage. In this story, is there a . . .

- truth to believe?
- promise to claim?
- behavior to adopt?

According to verse 2, this message was delivered after the children of God went into exile. Why do you think the message of comfort and promise comes after they are made captives?

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Why do you think this passage is in the Bible?

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What is the message God has for you in this story?

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In a sentence, write what you think the good news is in this passage.

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punch lines

" 'I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished' " **(Jeremiah 30:11, NIV).**

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" **(Hebrews 12:11, NIV).**

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent" **(Revelation 3:19, NIV).**

"Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty" **(Job 5:17, NIV).**

"You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty" **(Psalm 18:27, NIV).**

further insight

"God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service if they will yield themselves to Him. . . . Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness."

—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, 285

"All who in this world render true service to God or man receive a preparatory training in the school of sorrow. The weightier the trust and the higher the service, the closer is the test and the more severe the discipline."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 151

Sabbath

Read Hebrews 12:11.

Respond to the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. What does today's Bible verse say about the way we relate to discipline? Why do you think it is so easy to find another way rather than face up to discipline?

Sunday

Read Job 5:17.

Read the passage in the *Into the Story* section of the student lesson and respond to the study questions provided. What parts of this story are new to you, and what insights have you gained from this passage?

Do you think if we could see the big picture of God's will we would embrace adversity better, or do you think we would turn away from the challenges that lie ahead?

Monday

Read Jeremiah 29:10, 11.

Consider the message of the *Key Text* in this week's lesson. While this promise is one of the well-known passages of Scripture, the message of hope comes as a precursor to 70 years of submission to Babylon. How does knowing the context of this promise change the impact of the passage on you personally?

Tuesday

Read James 4:17.

In this week's *Flashlight* quote from *Prophets and Kings*, Ellen White refers to the way people at the end of time will "look upon sin as a light thing." How do you see this as true to life today? In what areas of your experience do you see the world minimizing the sinfulness of sin? As you think about great leaders in your life, whom do you know that models sensitivity to the wrongfulness of sin but still manages to walk in the promise of God's plan?

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson and identify the passage that is speaking to you today. Why does this Scripture seem to be so relevant to you now? What do you think God is trying to say to you?

Continue to reflect on the passages about how we grow through discipline and ask God to give you an opportunity to share your insights with someone else this week.

Thursday

Read Psalm 18:27.

In this week's lesson there are false prophets who try to persuade the people of God to minimize their need for discipline and subvert God's plan for their growth. Their message was popular and easier to receive than Jeremiah's, but completely untrue. Identify some of the voices that are "false prophets" in your life—voices that urge you to take the easy way instead of the right way. Maybe you have a close friend who struggles with honesty, or you find yourself wrestling with habits or temptations that derail your focus on Christ. Measure those voices against the promise of God in this week's key text and choose firmly to walk with God even though the future may seem unpleasant. Discover for yourself that God's promise is sure!

Friday

Read Revelation 3:19.

Reflect on the way God has guided you through seasons of learning that, although not pleasant, brought about real change and growth in your life. Perhaps you can identify with a person in Scripture that made a similar journey. Understanding the nature and purpose of God's discipline deepens our trust in God and our loyalty to His cause in our lives.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 36.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.