CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JULY 13 2024

storm warning

Scripture Story: Jeremiah 25 (esp. 1-14); 36.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 35.



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"When men's hearts are softened and subdued by the constraining influence of the Holy Spirit, they will give heed to counsel; but when they turn from admonition until their hearts become hardened, the Lord permits them to be led by other influences. Refusing the truth, they accept falsehood, which becomes a snare to their own destruction" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 425).

keytext

"Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster I plan to inflict on them, they will each turn from their wicked ways; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin."

(Jeremiah 36:3, NIV)

what do you think?

When somebody gives me a warning or tells me bad things are going to happen if I don't change my behavior, I

____ thank them for the warning and make changes right away.
____ ignore them.
____ later think about it and make changes.

did you know?

For many years while the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were divided, the Assyrian Empire was the most powerful nation in that part of the world. It was the Assyrians who conquered the kingdom of Israel and sent the 10 northern tribes into exile. But by the time of Jeremiah, the power of Assyria was on the way out. Egypt was still a mighty nation, and the king of Judah relied heavily on his alliance with the Egyptians. But an even greater power was on the rise—the Babylonian Empire. It was the newly powerful nation of Babylon that had its eye on the kingdom of Judah. The fall of Judah to the Babylonians was, in one way, a natural consequence of picking the wrong side in the power struggles that were going on in the region at the time. But in another sense, as the book of Jeremiah makes clear, it was God's way of sending a message to His people—if they were not faithful to Him, they would suffer the consequences of their disobedience.

INTO THE STORY

"In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 'Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now. Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster I plan to inflict on them, they will each turn from their wicked ways; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin.'

"So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the LORD had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll. Then Jeremiah told Baruch, 'I am restricted; I am not allowed to go to the LORD's temple. So you go to the house of the LORD on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll the words of the LORD that you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the people of Judah who come in from their towns. Perhaps they will bring their petition before the LORD and will each turn from their wicked ways, for the anger and wrath pronounced against this people by the LORD are great.'

"Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do; at the LORD's temple he read the words of the LORD from the scroll. . . .

"The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the LORD had hidden them."

(Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-26, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

At this point in the story, was God still prepared to hold back punishment if the people of Judah repented?

What was the purpose of Jeremiah getting Baruch to read the scroll to the people? Why did Jeremiah not read it to the people himself?

What was the response of the king and his counselors to Baruch's scroll? What do you think the king wanted to indicate by doing this?

What do you think is the best way to warn people about the consequences of their actions? What kind of warnings do you tend to listen to?

punch lines

"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?" **(Ezekiel 33:11, NIV).**

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" **(2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV).**

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near' " **(Matthew 4:17, NIV).**

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" **(2 Peter 3:9, NIV).**

further insight

"Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 23

"It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 27

Sabbath

Read Jeremiah 36:21-23.

Remember the last time a teacher, a parent, or someone else told you that what you were doing was wrong? How did you feel? Look over your answers to the *What Do You Think?* section.

_____
_____
_____

People respond to correction in very different ways. Sometimes it depends on how we're feeling. Sometimes it depends on who's doing the correcting—it's much easier to take correction and warnings from someone we respect and have a good relationship with.

The king of Judah was presented with a warning from God. How did he choose to respond?

_____
_____
_____

Sunday

Read Ezekiel 33:11.

Read the *Into the Story* section, then read and think about the *Out of the Story* questions. The king of Judah had a hard time accepting correction and rebuke. He didn't want to hear Jeremiah's warning.

Often we don't like to hear words of warning. We may respond by attacking the person who's warning us. Some people choose to ignore God's Word. But even if the warnings are ignored, the message is still there; there's a storm on the horizon, and we need to be prepared.

Monday

Read Jeremiah 36:3; Exodus 19:5; Luke 13:9.

Read this week's *Key Text.* Mark the statements below true or false based on what you read in that text:

T F God was planning to punish the people of Judah for their sins.

T F God had His mind made up, and nothing was going to change it.

Many of the predictions and warnings that the prophets brought to God's people were conditional. *If* they continued in their wicked ways, destruction would come. But *if* they were willing to change, the outcome would be different.

Most of the warnings we face are conditional too. They're what computer programmers call "if-then" statements—*if* you do this, *then* this will happen. *If* you watch TV instead of studying, *then* you'll fail your exam—but *if* you change your ways and study, *then* you'll pass.

Think of some other if-then warnings that relate to your everyday life:

IF I . . .	THEN . . .
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Even the final destruction of sin at the end of time is something we can avoid. *If* we turn away from sin and put our trust in Jesus, *then* we'll enjoy eternity in heaven with Him.

Tuesday

Read Matthew 4:17.

The *Flashlight* suggestion for this week suggests that the more often we ignore God's warning and refuse to repent, the harder it will be for us to change.

Get in the habit of listening to God! Read your Bible, pray, and pay attention to the advice of Christian friends, teachers, parents, and leaders. *If* you get used to responding to God's guidance, *then* it will get easier to follow!

Wednesday

Read through the *Punch Lines* texts and then use a Bible concordance to look up some more verses about repentance. In your own words, complete the statements below:

God has to punish sin because _____
_____.

Repentance means _____
_____.

If we repent, *then* God will _____
_____.

Thursday

Read Proverbs 12:1; 13:18; 15:5, 31, 32.

As we've seen, some people take correction better than others.

Below are some positive responses you could give to someone who offers a warning or correction. Can you add a few of your own?

- "Thanks for pointing that out. I'll think and pray about it."
- "I'm sorry. I'll try to do better next time."
- "I never thought of it that way before. . . . Thanks."

_____
_____
_____

Friday

Read John 14:26; Hebrews 3:7, 8.

Can you think of things in your life that the Holy Spirit wants to convict you about?

What are you prepared to change in your life in response to God's call?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 35.

**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.