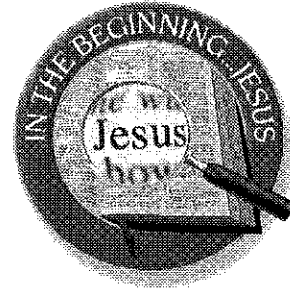


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 27

God's Prophets Foretell Coming Judgment and Deliverance

Themes

- God punished His sinful people by dividing them into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah.
- God sent prophets to His people warning them of judgment if they did not repent.
- God sent enemy nations to take Israel and then Judah into captivity.
- God promised to send a new type of King to rule over His people.
- God promised to make a new kind of covenant with His people.

Scripture:

Portions of 1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah

Memory Verse:

John 1:9 (and review verses 1-8)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - THE GREAT NATION OF ISRAEL (pieces, torn in previous lesson).
 - CANDIDATE CARDS 1-2.
 - DAVID'S THRONE, GOD'S TEMPLE (blocks from previous lesson).
 - GOD—MAN visual (from previous lessons).
 - JUDAH, ISRAEL, COVENANT BREAKERS A-B.
 - GOD SENDS HIS PROPHETS.
 - CAPTIVES.
 - VERSE 1-7 (see instructions on the next page).
 - JESUS IS THE KEY visual (from previous lessons).
 - COVENANT ARROW (see Resource Packet visual for Lesson 21).
 - Bible Clue Cards #29-#31.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue cards).
- Four 9"x12" pieces of red construction paper—Fold each piece in half. Place Bible Clue Cards #29 and #30 in the fold of two of the sheets. Glue the edges of these two sheets around the cards to seal them inside. Seal the other two sheets as well.

- Three 9"x12" pieces of blue construction paper. Prepare as above but this time use Bible Clue Card #31 inside one of the folded paper, sealing the edges as before. Seal the other two sheets as well.
- Instructions for VERSE 1-7—Attach Verse 1-4 to the outside of the four red folded papers, one verse per paper. Attach Verse 5-7 to the outside of the three blue folded papers. These will be referred to as the RED VERSE PAPERS and BLUE VERSE PAPERS.
- White board or large piece of paper and markers.
- A small section of steel chain and some ashes.

Lesson

Recall from our last lesson that Israel had a huge problem. What was it? [Solomon turned away from God, so God judged him by dividing the nation of Israel in two.] **Display** the two portions of **THE GREAT NATION OF ISRAEL** that was torn in the previous lesson.

Quickly read **1 Kings 11:9a, 11:**

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD.

Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "...I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant."

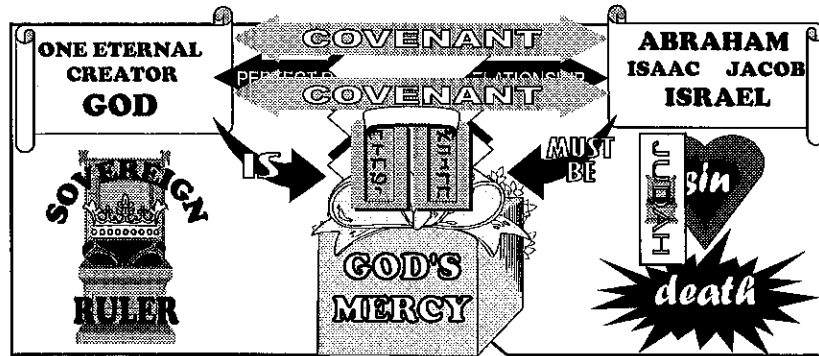
Display the block with **DAVID'S EVERLASTING THRONE** and ask: *What about the special promise God made to David? He had promised David there would always be one of his offspring sitting on the throne—an everlasting throne. Would God keep His promise? What was the clue hidden on the cloth in the last lesson?*

Have the children turn to **1 Kings 11:13:**

"However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David My servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."

Which tribe would God choose to keep for the sake of David? (Hint: Which tribe did God say the scepter would never depart from?) [Judah.]

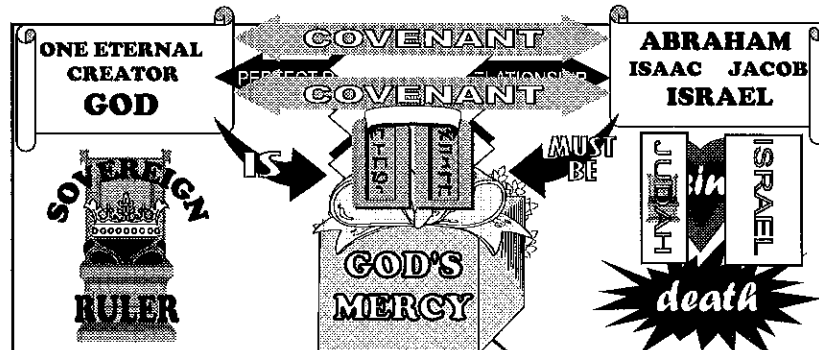
Display **JUDAH** and tape it to the **GOD—MAN** visual. Next, lightly tape the **COVENANT ARROW** over the torn arrow. The visual will now look like this:



Judah was the one tribe through which God would keep His promise to David. So it was now called the kingdom of Judah, and Jerusalem would be its capital city. What was important about Jerusalem? What special building was there? [The temple.]

Explain that the second kingdom (with ten tribes) would now be called Israel. **Display ISRAEL** and tape it to the right of **JUDAH** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. Israel would be located to the north of Judah. (If a map is available, show the location of these two kingdoms.) So instead of being one great nation, ruled by one great king, there were now two smaller, weaker nations—Judah and Israel.

The **GOD—MAN** visual should now look like this:



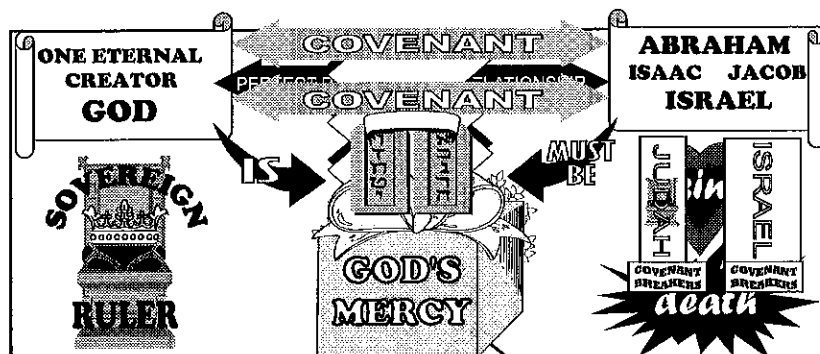
Point out that the northern kingdom of Israel had a series of 19 kings—all of them bad. Not one of them kept God's covenant or followed God like King David had done. Explain that the kingdom of Judah had a series of 20 kings. Most of these kings were also bad, several were okay, and only two were really good. But even these two (Josiah and Hezekiah) were not as great as David had been.

Does this situation look like things are going well for God's people and God's plan? Does this situation look like the tower we made in the previous lesson when we saw how God made His covenant people into a greater and greater nation?

Point out that about the only thing Israel and Judah seemed to be great at was being

continuous covenant breakers! On the **GOD—MAN** visual, carefully tear the **COVENANT ARROW** (the one with the Ten Commandment tablets) in half, from bottom to top. Tape the **COVENANT BREAKERS 1-2** across the bottom of the **JUDAH** and **ISRAEL** portions. This is a huge problem both for Israel and Judah. What would happen next?

The visual will now look like this:



Display GOD SENDS HIS PROPHETS. Explain that God's prophets were His special messengers, which He sent to Judah and Israel.

God sent His prophets with special messages from God to give to the people of Judah and Israel. Do you think the prophets were given messages the people wanted to hear?

Illustration: Choose two children to come up to the front. Have the children imagine they are all part of a class in school. Pretend that the class will be choosing a new class president for the year and [names of two children in your class] are the two candidates. Each child has a message for the class telling what he would do as president. Hand each child a card and have him read it aloud to the class:

Card # 1

If I am chosen as president, I promise to make recess longer. I promise we will have no more tests and no more homework. I promise we will have pizza and ice cream every day for lunch. I promise we will have more and longer vacations from school.

Card # 2

If I am chosen as president, I promise we will spend more time trying to learn hard subjects. I will stop all recess so we can study more. I will shorten our lunch time so we can study more. I will make sure we have more green vegetables with our lunch and no sweets. I will make sure we have fewer and shorter vacations.

Ask the children in the class which candidate would probably be the more popular

one? Why? Have the two children return to their seats.

Suppose for a minute that our class had a huge problem—we were all failing math and spelling. As popular as [first candidate's] message might be, would that be the message we NEED to hear?

Point out that Judah and Israel also had a huge problem—they were covenant breakers. What kind of message would Judah and Israel need? Explain that God's prophets had three different kinds of messages to give to Judah and Israel. Hand out the **RED VERSE PAPERS** to four children. Tell the children to listen carefully as each child reads his verse aloud:

From Jeremiah (6:19)

Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people...because they have not paid attention to My words; and as for My law, they have rejected it.

From Joel (2:1b-2a)

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!

From Hosea (7:13a)

Woe to them, for they have strayed from Me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against Me!

From Amos (3:11b)

An adversary shall surround the land and bring down your defenses from you, and your strongholds shall be plundered.

All of these verses give an example of the first type of message the prophets gave to Judah and Israel. What kind of message could we call it? [A message warning of judgment.] On the white board write: 1) Warning message.

Do you think these messages were popular with the people? Were the prophets telling them things they wanted to hear?

Hand out the **BLUE VERSE PAPERS** to three children. Have them read their verses aloud as the children listen carefully for the kind of message being given:

From Jeremiah (3:12)

Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, "Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever."

From Joel (2:12a)

"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to Me with all your heart."

From Isaiah (55:7)

Let the wicked forsake his way...let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

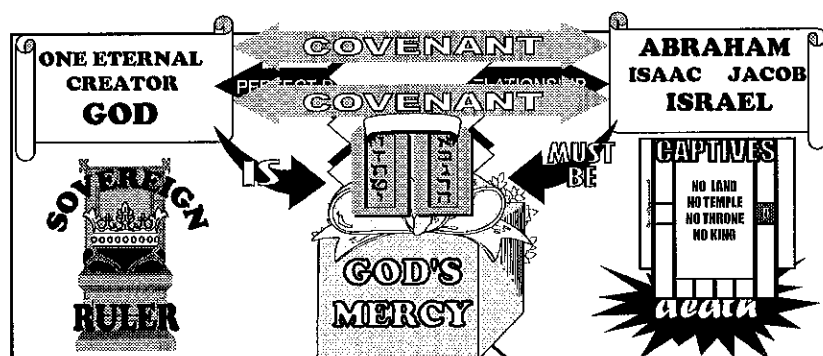
All of these verses give an example of the second type of message the prophets gave to Judah and Israel. What kind of message could we call it?

[A message to return to God and repent.] On the white board write:

2) Return message.

After hearing messages warning of coming judgment, do you think they would be happy to hear God calling them to repent and be saved from that judgment?

Display the chain and ashes. Tell the children that these are clues about what happened next. Did Judah and Israel listen? Explain that after hundreds of years of God's prophets warning the people and calling them to repent, the people refused to listen. So God sent enemy nations to invade Israel and then Judah. The people were taken away into captivity (hold up the chains). They were slaves again, just as they had been in Egypt. Hold up the ashes and explain that when Judah was captured, the enemy nation came in and destroyed Jerusalem, including the temple, and burned it to the ground. **Display CAPTIVES** and tape it to the middle of **JUDAH** and **ISRAEL** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. It should now look like this:



Now God's people are without a land of their own, without a king, without a throne, and without a temple. Are they without their God also? What about God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David?

Explain that earlier in this lesson you said that God's prophets had three kinds of messages. So far, we have only given examples of two: messages warning of judgment and calls to return to God.

However, hidden between these messages are examples of a third kind of message.

Tell the children that you just gave them a clue about where to find examples of the third kind of message. (Give the children additional hints if necessary to find the Bible Clue Cards.)

Choose three children to quickly come up and insert the **Bible Clue Cards** behind the red paper of the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual. As they are doing this, divide the class into three groups (e.g., boys, girls, teachers) and assign each group one of the Scripture references from the cards to read. Choose one person from each group to read the passage aloud:

Bible Clue Card #29

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Bible Clue Card #30

Scripture: Micah 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Bible Clue Card #31

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah."

Open Windows #11, 27, and 4 to reveal: **GOD WITH US, RULER FROM BETHLEHEM, NEW COVENANT.**

Do these messages tell of good news or bad news for Judah and Israel? If we had to give a title for these messages, what would you call it?

On the white board write: 3) Hope messages. Explain that God's prophets knew all along that God's people would not listen and repent. They knew God would judge His people. But God also gave them a message of hope. In the future, God would save His people—not through the old covenant Judah and Israel kept on breaking, but through a new kind of covenant. And God would also give His people a new kind of King. How would He do this? Through a Child born of a virgin—a miracle Baby.

Point out that now, more than 2,000 years later, we know who the King is who came from Bethlehem. We know who the Baby was that was born from a virgin. And we know about the new covenant that was made. But back then, the prophets could only depend on God to keep His promise in the future.

Application

- ❑ **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 27 in their workbooks and write the missing words to complete the clues in the notebook section: God With Us, Ruler from Bethlehem, and New Covenant.
- ❑ **WORKBOOK**—Have the children look at the workbook portion of their page. There are three boxes under the heading: God Sends His Prophets. Read the verses in each box. What kind of message is being sent by the prophets in these verses? Give each box a correct title. (For example: Warning Message, Return Message, Hope Message.)
- ❑ One by one, talk about each of today's clues and discuss what particular person, event, etc., the clue might be pointing toward. Why was it important for God's prophets to be given these clues by God? Even though things seemed hopeless for Judah and Israel, what did God want His people to remember? Because we have the New Testament (which can be translated "New Covenant") we have already seen how God has completed some of these promises through the birth of Jesus. Why is it important for us to know that these clues had been given to God's prophets long before Jesus was actually born? What does it prove? Can God be trusted to keep His promises? What if we don't yet see the promise completely fulfilled? What should we do? (God's Old Testament prophets did not live to see the birth of Jesus.) Does it help you to better believe in God's Word? How?
- ❑ Read through one or two of the warning and repentance verses from today's lesson. Explain that these verses were given specifically to the people of Judah and Israel many years ago. Does the Bible have any verses that give warnings to all people? Any verses that call all people to repent? Any verses that give a message of hope available to all people? Where would you find some of those verses? (Examples: **John 3:16-17**; **Acts 2:38-39**; **Romans 10:11-13**; etc.) *Do you heed the warning of these verses? Are they calling you to repent? Do you do what these call you to do?*
- ❑ Did the prophets tell the people what they wanted to hear? Were they just trying to be mean? Do you think their messages were popular? Then why did they give them? Who gave them their messages? (On whose authority were they speaking.) If your parents warn you ahead of time about punishment that you will receive if you do not change a certain behavior, will you have any excuse when you are punished for not changing it? Did the people of Judah and Israel have any excuse? Could they say that God was being mean or unfair? Why not? Are there times that you read things in the Bible that tell you things that you don't especially want to hear? For

example, read **Luke 6:27-28**. Would there be a reason you might not want to hear these words? Why? But do you NEED to hear these words? Why?

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