

## Lesson #3-11

# *A New Covenant*

Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34

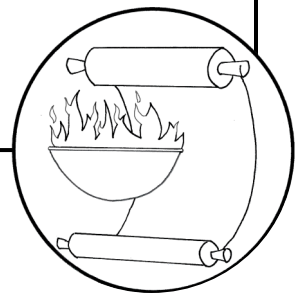


### **Key Verse:**

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.  
Jeremiah 31:31

### **The Point:**

No matter what we do, God promises a renewed relationship with us.



## *Introduction*

God gave Jeremiah a message for the people. If they did not repent and change, they faced harsh consequences. Jeremiah sent Baruch to the temple to read the message to the crowd. The king did not like the message and commanded that the scroll be sent to him. As it was read to him, the king cut off each part and threw it into the fire until the entire scroll was burned. God told Jeremiah to rewrite the words on another scroll. Even though the people broke the last covenant with God, the Lord would make a new covenant with the people.

### **The Point**

**No matter what we do, God promises a renewed relationship with us.** There are two parts of Jeremiah's story in today's lesson: one part about warning and one about blessing. The warnings God gives are specific to time, place, and people, but it is the vision of blessing (Jeremiah 31) that has sticking power. Jeremiah announces a vision of God's grace and peace. Even though God's warnings are still needed to correct the tenuous ways we live together, the word of God that lasts forever is one of blessing. God's vision of new life will have the final word.

# Activities a la Carte

## Activities

## Supplies

### Introduction

#### *The Best, The Worst, The Unexpected*

Imagine how plans might change.

10 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-11.A
- † Pencils with erasers
- † Sticky notes

### Learning the Story

#### *Get the Word Out*

Follow God's communication channel.

10 min.

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-11.B
- † Pens or pencils

### Activities

#### *Scroll of Dreams*

Create scrolls of warning and blessing.

15 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-11.C
- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Tape
- † String or ribbon
- † Decorations (markers, stickers, etc.)

#### *See God's Word, Hear God's Word*

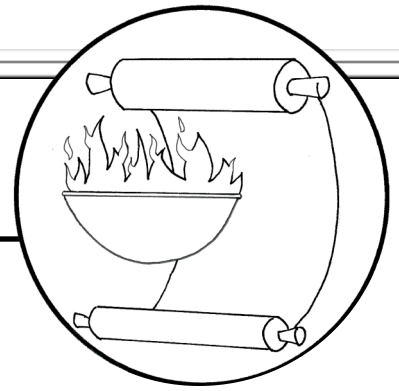
Receive God's word in different ways.

15 min.

- † Bibles
- † Earmuffs
- † Earplugs
- † Earphones
- † Paper cups
- † Water glasses
- † Eyewear of different varieties

### Prayer

# God's Story @ Home



## Into the Story (10 minutes)

### *The Best, The Worst, and The Unexpected*

Imagine how plans might change.

#### *Supplies:*

- † Activity Sheet #3-11.A
- † Pencils with erasers
- † Sticky notes

#### *Preparation:*

1. Make a copy of Activity Sheet #3-11.A.
2. Prepare two sets of sticky notes, one for “Unexpected” and one for “Blessings,” writing one of the following statements on each note. Supply one “Unexpected” and one “Blessings” sticky note for each person.
3. Unexpected:
  - School closes due to inclement weather
  - Lost car keys
  - Basement floods
  - Broken arm
  - Carpool driver cancels
  - Electricity goes out
  - Car breaks down
  - Someone in your household comes down with the stomach flu
  - Two-hour traffic delay
  - Tornado warning

**Blessings:**

- Help a sick neighbor with grocery shopping
- Help a friend study for math exam
- Pray with a sad friend or family member
- Assist the pastor during worship
- Plant a neighborhood fruit and vegetable garden
- Visit a friend you have not seen recently
- Write a note to a coworker or friend about a job well done

**Instructions:**

1. **Work together to fill in information about your expected daily plans for the coming week. For example, mark your main plans for school, work, appointments, activities, meals, and things you expect to do at home.**
2. Distribute the sticky notes with a variety of unexpected events written on them. Everyone should receive at least one sticky note. Work the events into the schedules, erasing and rewriting as necessary.
3. **Discuss the following questions:**
  - **How do you feel about the week you have planned? Would you consider yourself busy?**
  - **What did adding an unwelcome event do to your plans?**
  - **How would you plan differently if someone told you that something bad was coming? Would you believe the person giving you the warning? Would you make different plans? How would you manage the situation ahead of time?**
5. After this conversation, distribute sticky notes with blessing events. Everyone should receive at least one sticky note. Work these events into the schedules, erasing and rewriting as necessary.
6. **Discuss the following questions:**
  - **How do you think you might plan your upcoming week differently if someone told you that a blessing was coming?**
  - **Would it make a difference if it were a blessing that you might receive or a blessing you might give?**
  - **Do you notice a difference between planning for a warning of disaster or the arrival of a blessing?**
7. **Our story today is about Jeremiah, whom God called to be a prophet. A prophet is a person who shares God's messages of warnings to come if things do not change or messages of blessings to come. Hearing the messages God gave to people before us through God's prophets can help us understand our own lives and situations today. We can think about**



difficult circumstances in our homes, neighborhoods, and beyond, and how those situations might cause trouble to ourselves or to others.

8. When things go wrong and people get hurt or find life especially difficult, we might appreciate warnings about how situations need to change. We can also imagine circumstances of blessing, where people feel safe and experience love. Messages about blessing are also vitally important, telling us about how people can best care for the needs and lives of others. Today we will hear more about Jeremiah and how he shared words of warning and a vision of blessing with God's people. His story can challenge us to consider how warnings and visions of blessing might be heard by us today and prompt us to care for our neighbors.

## *Learning the Story (10 minutes)*

### *Get the Word Out*

Follow God's communication channel.

#### *Supplies:*

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-11.B
- † Pens or pencils

#### *Preparation:*

1. Make a copy of Activity Sheet #3-11.B for each person.

#### *Instructions:*

1. Read aloud Jeremiah 36: 1-8, 21-23, 27-28 and then Jeremiah 31:41-34.
2. **Jeremiah's story is about communicating God's messages, sometimes known as prophecies, of warnings and blessings. Now, we will discuss how prophecies were shared with a large group of people before the telephone, the Internet, or even an official postal service existed! Without the tools we use today for mass communication, how would messages get anywhere?**
3. **Look deeper into Jeremiah's story to find out how God communicated important messages of blessing and promise to the people. Find out who helped and who stopped God's communication by filling in each block about the messengers and messages in the story found on the activity sheet. With help from the Bible story, complete the activity sheet together. Discuss your thoughts.**
4. **God's message gets out through people communicating with one another, whether that is by spoken or written words. There is a saying that gets shared in the church sometimes, attributed to many different people, to "preach the gospel always—if necessary use words." We find out from learning about the prophets that it is indeed important to use words! God wants us to tell others about God's expectations and vision for a good, whole life in the world. So follow Jeremiah's example and tell others about God!**

## Activity (10 minutes)

### Scroll of Dreams

Create scrolls of warning and blessing.

#### Supplies:

- † Activity Sheet #3-11.C
- † Large, rectangular sheets of paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Tape
- † String or ribbon
- † Various craft supplies (markers, stickers, etc.)

#### Preparation:

1. Make a copy of Activity Sheet #3-11.C for every two or three people.
2. Each person will need a piece of paper, string, and a pen or pencil. Everyone should have markers, tape, and other decorations available to them.

#### Instructions:

1. Have everyone find a partner. Pair pre-readers with a confident reader and writer. A group of three is fine in the case of an odd number. Distribute one copy of the activity sheet to each pair.
2. **Jeremiah asked his friend and coworker, Baruch, to write down God's words of warning and blessing for God's people. Today, we will do the same for each other, seeing God's work and God's will in each other's lives. Take a look for a minute at the sample scroll in front of you.**
3. **Please create a similar scroll for your partner. Use the activity sheet to guide a discussion with your partner. When you have finished your scroll, decorate the page with drawings or with some of the craft materials. Roll up the scroll and close it with a piece of tape, then gently tie a piece of string around it. Give the scroll to your partner.**



## *Activity (15 minutes)*

### *See God's Word, Hear God's Word*

Receive God's word in different ways.

#### *Supplies:*

- † Bibles
- † Earmuffs
- † Earplugs
- † Earphones
- † Paper cups
- † Water glasses
- † Eyewear of different varieties

#### *Preparation:*

1. Provide enough supplies for everyone to try one item that affects seeing (paper cups, water glasses, eyewear) and one that affects hearing (earmuffs, earplugs, earphones).
2. Cut small holes in the bottom of the paper cups.
3. Adapt this activity as necessary if anyone has difficulty seeing or hearing.

#### *Instructions:*

1. Distribute items, making sure each person has one that affects their sight and one that affects hearing.
2. **First, try reading Jeremiah 31:31-34 in your Bibles using one of the tools that changes your vision in some way.** Pre-readers can use the items to look at and identify something else.
3. **Now, use a tool that changes your hearing in some way and listen as Jeremiah 31:31-34 is read aloud to you, without you reading it on your own.** Read the passage aloud.
4. **Now let's discuss the experience of seeing and then hearing God's vision of the world found in Jeremiah 31:31-34.**
  - **Was it easier or harder to receive God's word based on your use of the glasses or hearing items? What difference did they make as you were trying to receive God's word?**





6. In this reading, God communicated something important about the way God wants all people to be. The people heard God's words clearly when Baruch read to them from the scroll. But King Jehoiakim refused to listen to the word of God through Jeremiah. The result was that the king and his followers did not understand God's expectations for the ways they would live together. They refused to see or hear God and receive God's blessing of mercy and life.

# Prayer

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Review the lesson by discussing the following questions.

1. **What kinds of things do you think might have been going wrong in Israel and Judah? Why would God want to send a warning to them?**
2. **What is going wrong in your community that needs to change? How can you help? How could your congregation help?**
3. **What kind of blessings does your community need? Are there blessings or gifts you would like to share with them? How would those blessings “taste sweet” to them?**

Make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Stand in a circle to pray:

Leader: **Holy God, sometimes it is hard to hear your messages.**

All: (Cup hands around ears as the leader reads.)

Leader: **God calls us to turn from our evil ways, for great is the anger and wrath that the Lord has pronounced against this people.**

All: Deliver us from evil, O God!

Leader: **Holy God, sometimes it is sweet to hear your messages.**

All: (Cup hands around ears as the leader reads.)

Leader: **The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant.**

All: Your kingdom come, O God!

Leader: **In your holy name we pray.**

All: Amen.

If you have the “Living the Word: Sharing God’s Story @ Home” sheet, remember to use it throughout the week as a part of your family devotions!

*Imagine how plans might change.*

## Our Weekly Calendar

Calendar for week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



# Get the Word Out

*Follow God's communication channel.*

Messenger	Message	How was the message delivered?	Who received the message?	Did the new messenger pass the message on?
God	<i>Hint: Jeremiah 37:2-3.</i>	Spoken.	Jeremiah.	Yes.
Jeremiah				
Baruch, son of Neriah		Scroll.		Yes.
The people of Judah			They shared it among themselves.	



# Get the Word Out

*Follow God's communication channel.*

Messenger	Message	How was the message delivered?	Who received the message?	Did the new messenger pass the message on?
Elishama, King Jehoiakim's secretary			Jehudi.	
Jehudi				
King Jehoiakim			No one. It should have gone from the king as a message to all the people, but King Jehoiakim tried to stop God's word from going any further.	No. He cut off pieces of the scroll one by one and threw the pieces in the fire.





# Scroll of Dreams

*Create scrolls of warning and blessing.*

Your partner's name

Your name and relationship to the person:

Date:

Describe some notable things about your partner. What do you love, enjoy, admire, and appreciate about them?

## Warnings:

*\*These are not threats, but instead specific ways you want to encourage your partner. If you are uncertain, ask them what things they think they should change.*

- Maybe your partner could use some extra attention on a topic in school or toward a responsibility at home. Describe how you see that their challenges are tough and suggest ways for the difficulty to be overcome. Offer to pray for that person and lend your support.

## Blessings:

- Describe the gifts you see God has given your person.
- Describe the ways you see those gifts might be useful in the community in an activity, hobby, or future job.
- Describe the ways those gifts might be put forward in service to the church.

Conclude by telling the person what they mean to you and to God.

In Christ,  
[Signed by you.]