



AWANA GO MONGOLIA 2.0 KING ZEDEKIAH AND JEREMIAH - LESSON PLAN

To gain context for this study you can read Jeremiah 36 – 39 NIV. (Also, more details can be found in these books 2 Chronicles 36:11-17 and 2 Kings 25:1-12) Our focus will be on Chapters 37-39 about Jeremiah the prophet and King Zedekiah the last king of Judah. This story took place 586 BC in the city of Jerusalem. (Take some time to explain what BC means if it is something the kids in your group would be able to understand)

Some background:

God's people, the nation of Israel, were on the brink of going into exile to Babylon because they had sinned and not followed God's commands. God had warned them many times and had told them exactly how to follow Him and the importance of obedience. God had also warned them what to expect if they didn't obey. Captivity and exile could be avoided but it all hinged on whether the King and the people would listen and obey, trusting what God was saying to them through the prophet Jeremiah!

Jeremiah the prophet of God had dedicated his life to speaking the truth and the words that God gave him, no matter what it cost. In this story, we see his commitment to God's calling and the extent he would go so everyone would know what God wanted them to do.

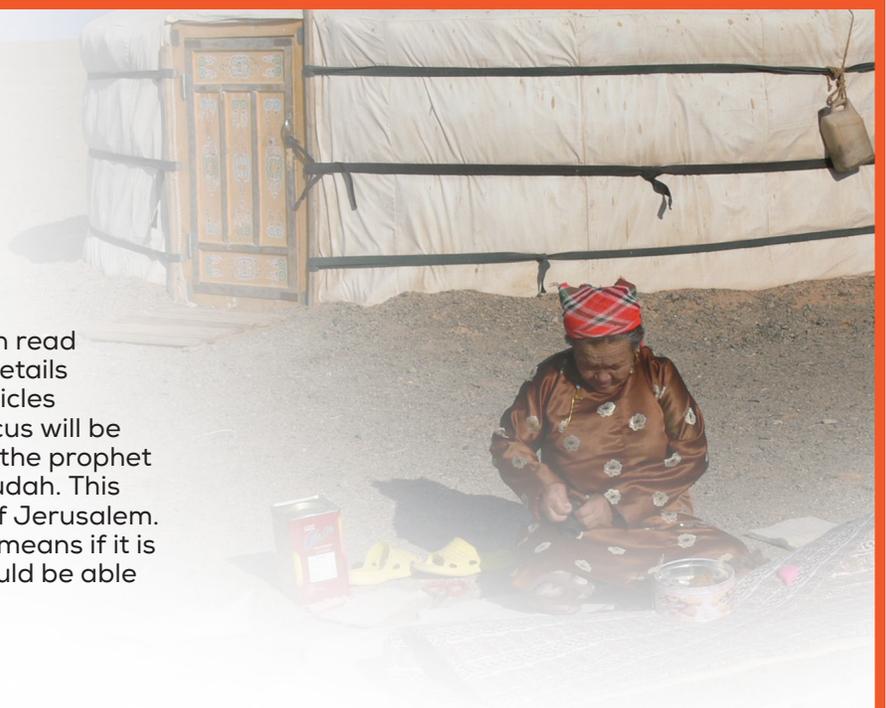
QUESTION 1: WHAT IS A PROPHET?

ANSWER: One who speaks to the people on behalf of God. He hears from God and then tells the people what God wants them to hear and know.

QUESTION 2: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EXILED?

ANSWER: To be banished or taken away from your own country or home.

BIG IDEA AND THEMES: Can we trust God to keep His promises and to do what He says? What can we expect from God if we refuse to trust and obey what we know He is telling us? Do you think that your friends can influence you to follow God or not? Who might be someone like a "prophet" in your life that is telling you what God wants you to know? eg, Awana leader, parent, Sunday School teacher etc. Let's read our story to see what the answers are to these questions!



QUESTION 3: WHAT DOES GOD TELL JEREMIAH TO SAY TO KING ZEDEKIAH? (READ JEREMIAH 37:6-10)

ANSWER: Tell the king of Judah that 'Pharaoh's army (Egyptians), which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land, to Egypt. Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.' "This is what the Lord says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not! Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

QUESTION 4: WHAT ELSE DID GOD TELL JEREMIAH TO SAY TO KING ZEDEKIAH? (READ JEREMIAH 38:2-3)

ANSWER: To surrender to the Babylonians. Wait, what? God wants us to surrender to the enemy so we can live and stay in our city? Yes, that's exactly what God was saying to them. God wanted them to trust Him and not rely on their army or their own human wisdom but on Him.

QUESTION 5: (READ JEREMIAH 38:14-20, 24-27) FROM OUR READING, WHAT TWO THINGS DO WE SEE THAT KING ZEDEKIAH IS AFRAID OF? WHY IS HE AFRAID?

ANSWER: The people and his own friends and officials.

LEADER: Zedekiah is in a struggle to do what he knows God through Jeremiah is telling him to do. He calls for Jeremiah to come again. He is essentially telling Jeremiah, "I want to hear/do what God wants, but I'm afraid! I'm afraid of the Jews (who were his own people) who had already surrendered themselves to the Babylonians, that they would mistreat him. He is also afraid of his own friends and officials; the very ones that he would have put into office to serve him. He tells Jeremiah to not tell anyone and if his officials ask what they talked about, he commands Jeremiah to only tell them that he was pleading for his life and to not be sent back to the house of Jonathan to die there.

QUESTION 6: WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT KING ZEDEKIAH'S FRIENDS?

ANSWER: That his friends were calling the shots and Zedekiah feared them and what they would do. Jeremiah 38:22b They misled you and overcame you—those trusted friends of yours.

QUESTION 7: DO YOU THINK KING ZEDEKIAH SHOULD HAVE BEEN AFRAID? SHORT ANSWER: NO, WHY? BECAUSE JEREMIAH TOLD HIM THAT GOD HAD PROMISED TO PROTECT HIM AND HIS FAMILY AS WELL AS THE CITY OF JERUSALEM IF HE SURRENDERED TO THE BABYLONIANS.

ANSWER: Jeremiah 38:20 – They will not hand you over," Jeremiah replied. "Obey the Lord by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared.

QUESTION 8: SHOULD ZEDEKIAH BEEN FEARFUL OR WAS THERE SOMETHING/SOMEONE THAT HE SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED?

ANSWER: He should have feared God only and chosen to do what God asked him to do. His actions had the power to save himself, his family's lives, his people, and the city. Instead, he did not trust God's words, and he worried about what his officials would think and if the people would mistreat him.

QUESTION 9: WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD FROM THIS STORY? (JEREMIAH 40:2-3)

ANSWER: God is trustworthy. God always keeps His promises and does what He says. We can depend on that and trust that to be true in our own lives as well. Even when God asks us to do something that is scary and uncomfortable we can trust God and His promises.

QUESTION 10: DID GOD KEEP HIS PROMISE IN OUR STORY?

ANSWER: Read Jeremiah 39:4-8 Yes, as we see in our story that King Zedekiah and his men tried to escape but were caught. His sons were killed, and the nobles of Judah, Zedekiah, were bound and taken to Babylon. They burned the house of the Lord, the royal palace, and the houses of the people and the walls of the city were broken down and destroyed just as God had said. 2 Kings 25:9.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. How do you respond to God's word?
2. Think about your friends, do they help you to obey God or encourage you to do things you know you shouldn't?
3. Think through what kind of friend you are to others. Do you help others to obey God or encourage others to sin or do wrong?
4. What do you think is the first step in trusting God? (Believe Him, His word and be saved)
5. How else can we obey? Learn to know God and serve Him by telling others about Him and by studying His word.

THE POINT: We can avoid a lot of grief, anguish, and anxiety if we believe God and trust His promises. It can mean freedom rather than captivity! It can mean Joy instead of Anxiety!

ADDITIONAL STUDY: What are some promises that you can remember from the Bible that God has given you and that you can trust Him for?

