

Prophets Announce Messages from God

Anchor command. “Hear the word of the Lord.” *2 Kings 20:16*

Anchor story. King Jehoiakim burns the scroll of Jeremiah’s prophecies, and later throws him into a pit of miry clay. *Jeremiah chapter 36 and 38:2-13*

Anchor verse. “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!”
Matthew 23:37

Learning goal. Understand the role of the Old Testament prophets.

Growth goal. Have the same bold resolve to speak the truth as the Old Testament prophets did.

Skill goal. Relate key events in teachings of the Old Testament prophets in a convincing way.

Outcome goal. Believers have an accurate grasp of the importance of God’s prophets, and appreciate their messages from God.

Lord Jesus, you died to deliver us from the consequences of our sin. Please, help us to face up to our sinfulness and to live by your victory over sin. Amen.

Basic Study

Find in the account of Jeremiah’s persecution...

- From whom did the words come from that the Lord told Jeremiah to write on a scroll? *Jeremiah 36:1-2*
- What did the king do to the scroll when Jeremiah’s co-worker Jehudi read it to him? *36:21-23*
- What did Jeremiah do to remedy what the king had done? *36:32*
- When Jeremiah predicted that God would destroy Jerusalem because of the people’s sin, what did the King’s officials do to Jeremiah? *38:2-6*
- What did one of the King’s officials, Ebed-melech, do for Jeremiah? *38:7, 12-13*



Ancient well

During the week. You and your co-workers visit new believers and explain how God's prophets like Jeremiah boldly proclaimed God's truth, in spite of much persecution.

During worship tell the story of Jeremiah's persecution, and ask the same questions as above.

Ask the children to present what they have prepared.

Memorize together Isaiah 1:18.

Advanced Study

1. **Prepare yourself with prayer and the Word of God** to help your congregation deal with its sinfulness, as the prophets of old did for the people of Israel.
 - The Bible teaches that **everybody is born with sin**, all are sinners, and every one of us commits sins (1 John 1:8-10).
 - Find in **Genesis 3:1–9** where sin came from:
 - What lie did the devil tell to our first ancestors? [Verses 4 & 5]
 - What punishment did God announce against the devil? [Verses 13–15]



- What punishment did God announce against our ancestors? [Verses 16–19]
- Find in **Psalm 51:1–5** what King David said about his sin:
- What did he recognize to be his need? *Verses 1 & 2*
- What did he say about his sins? *3*
- Against whom did he commit sin? *4*
- When did he become a sinner? *5*

- Find in **Hebrews 12:1–4** how dangerous our sin is:
 - How apt are we believers to commit sins? *Verse 1*
 - What did Jesus endure on the cross because of our sins? *2*
 - What can happen to us because of other sinners? *3*
 - Why do we sometimes yield to sin? *4*
2. **Our sins bring three terrible results: guilt, shame and bondage:**

- 1) **Guilt.** We are guilty before God. Like a criminal who is tried in a court of law and condemned by a judge, so we must give an account to God for our sins.

Fortunately, Christ took our sins to the cross where he died in our place. Thus, God forgives all the sins of those who trust in Jesus.

- 2) **Shame.** We suffer shame before God. Like a person who has been caught in the act of doing something shameful, so we humans can suffer great shame before God when he will reveal all the sins of everyone at the Final Judgment.

But — thanks to God — Jesus Christ suffered public shame in our place, so that, when he returns, we will not be put to shame.

- 3) **Bondage.** We come into bondage to sinful practices. Like an alcoholic who cannot stop drinking, and whose family is destroyed by his drinking, so we all become addicted to sinful things like alcohol, drugs, magic, false gods, immoral activities, and illicit relationships.

But God be praised! When Jesus died on the cross for us, he destroyed the power of the evil one and provided freedom from our bondages.



3. Plan with your co-workers additional activities for the coming week.

- Discuss together your congregation's member's need to be forgiven and freed. Which members need to embrace God's forgiveness of the sins they have committed? Go visit them, help them to confess their sins, serve communion to them, and pray with them to know forgiveness.
- Which members still feel ashamed of their former way of life? Go visit them, explain how Jesus was put to shame for them, and pray for them to overcome their shame.
- Which members need to overcome addictions? Go visit them, help them to renounce their bad habits, assure them of your continued watch-care and pray for their freedom.
- Help all of these members memorize **1 John 2:28**.

4. Plan with your co-workers additional, optional activities for the up-coming worship

- Let believers who recently found freedom from bad habits or demons give **testimonies**.
- **Read or act out Acts 19:11–20**. Then explain how the people confessed their sins and abandoned their bondage to magic. Thus, they were forgiven, overcame their shame, and were freed from their bondage to evil spirits.
- **To introduce the Lord's Table**, read Genesis 3:6-10 and verse 21. Explain that Adam and Eve tried to cover their shame with fig leaves. But God clothed them with animal skins because our sins must be hidden from God's sight with the blood of an innocent victim. The animal sacrifices foretold Jesus the Lamb of God who took away all sins.
- **Form small groups** of two and three. Let them confess any public sins and pray for each other's forgiveness and freedom.
- Those who teach children should read study #56 for children.