



12

Seventy Years

Key Theme

- God is sovereign over all things.

Key Passages

- Jeremiah 25:11–12, 29:4–7, 29:10; Psalm 115:3

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the length of the captivity of Judah in Babylon.
- Describe the prophecies Jeremiah made during the captivity.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will practice the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet using the letter clues. If time allows, they will recite the verse to a partner or to the teacher using only the letter clues.



Activity 1: Seventy Years Class Notes

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Students will fill out the Seventy Years Class Notes as you study the lesson. Pass out the class notes before you begin to teach.



Studying God's Word

page 5

God finally judged Judah through King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The survivors of the Babylonian attack were taken to Babylon to serve as slaves. However, God did not leave them without hope. God spoke through His prophet Jeremiah and revealed that the captivity would be 70 years and then their faithful God would return them home again.



Activity 2: Babylonian Captivity Challenge

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Students will divide into teams and compete by lining up and quickly answering review questions about the lesson.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student



SEVENTY YEARS CLASS NOTES

- Print one Seventy Years Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Seventy Years Class Notes for each student
- Seventy Years Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY CHALLENGE

- Print one Babylonian Captivity Challenge Questions Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Babylonian Captivity Challenge Questions Sheet for teacher reference
- Dry beans to pass out for correct answers



Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

For years Jeremiah had issued warnings to the people of Judah. The lion from the north (Jeremiah 4:5–8), Babylon, would come and wipe out the nation. Judah was warned to repent of their evil ways. Jeremiah implored them to give up their false gods, so that God’s anger would not be provoked against them. Yet they did not listen to the Lord (Jeremiah 25:4–7). God’s anger was finally unleashed against them through King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. The day of judgment had come for Judah. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, burning the city and the Temple to the ground as well as destroying the city wall and killing many of the inhabitants (2 Kings 25:8–10). During this destruction, Jeremiah continued to be a key figure in the Jewish community along with two other prophets of God, Daniel and Ezekiel.

Up to this point, Jeremiah had served many different roles as a prophet of God. He proclaimed judgments against the kings and people of Judah (Jeremiah 2–4). He called the people to repentance (Jeremiah 4:14–18). He promised that God would not completely destroy them and would one day restore His people (Jeremiah 5:18).

Today, we will see that God required even more of His prophet, Jeremiah. God gave him words to speak concerning future events and to bring specific commands to God’s people (Jeremiah 29). Jeremiah brought these particular prophecies on behalf of God while the people were in captivity in Babylon.

The first prophecy concerning future events had to do with how long God’s people would be captive to the Babylonians. We read about this in Jeremiah 25. Jeremiah gave this prophecy in “the fourth year of Jehoiakim” (Jeremiah 25:1)—before Babylon’s initial invasion. Jeremiah recorded here for the first time that God would remove the voice of mirth and gladness from the people who would now serve the king of Babylon for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:10–11). Jeremiah also assured the people that when the 70 years of desolation were completed, Babylon would be judged for their iniquity (Jeremiah 25:12).

Once the captivity of Judah began, the people no doubt began to listen to and believe Jeremiah. The prophecies concerning their destruction by Babylon had occurred exactly as he had predicted, and the 70 years of captivity would surely follow. In fact, the

prophet Daniel—himself a victim of the Babylonian deportation—confirmed his confidence in Jeremiah’s 70-year prophecy as evidenced by his own writing (Daniel 9:1–2). Another confirmation to this important prophecy appears in 2 Chronicles 36. The Scriptures mention that those who escaped the sword and were carried away to Babylon were made servants of that kingdom. And while they were captive, the land they left—Judah—would lay desolate for 70 years (2 Chronicles 36:20–21).

So God used Jeremiah to speak of the future—that the Jewish people would be captive in Babylon for 70 years. But God was also to use Jeremiah to instruct His people even as they lived as servants in Babylon. In a letter to the priests, the prophets, and all the people carried away by King Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah reminded the people that it was the Lord who caused them to be carried away as captives (Jeremiah 29:4). Because they would be there so long, God commanded them to build houses, plant gardens, take wives, and start families so they would continue to increase in number (Jeremiah 29:5–6). This would set the foundation for a return to Jerusalem at the end of the 70 years—a godly remnant who would repopulate Jerusalem and continue the line that would ultimately lead to the Messiah.

God continued speaking to them through Jeremiah as a faithful Father would. God reassured His children that, after the 70 years were completed, He would indeed cause them to return to the land He had led them away from. The Lord was looking forward to restoring the worship in Jerusalem and to renewing the people in right worship (Jeremiah 29:10–14). The words of Jeremiah to the exiles were words of true hope, filled with the language of certainty—God *would* bring these things to pass.

God’s commands had been given, and the people had hope. But Jeremiah again had to give warning to the people in exile—warning against false prophets in their midst who strove to deceive the people with lies. These prophets claimed their dreams were of the Lord and dared to speak in His name. The Lord warned the people that these false prophets had not come in His name (Jeremiah 29:8–9). The Lord advised that those prophets were not to be trusted or listened to. The false prophets would deal with the consequences—God’s punishment and curse (Jeremiah 29:21–32).

And so the people waited in hope—true hope—given to them by a proven prophet of God, Jeremiah. They would be led by God back to Jerusalem after the

appointed time. They knew that throughout the entire history of Israel, God had been directing their steps. From calling Moses to lead the people out of Egypt to the installing of the first king—from the constant rebellions to the capture of Israel by the Assyrians and the capture of Judah by the Babylonians—God had been in control. God was orchestrating their lives and future through His providential care and sovereign grace.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

If you walk into your local neighborhood Christian bookstore, you will likely find plaques and trinkets inscribed with Scripture. Often, there will be a single verse or even part of a verse with a picture. But what about the context of the passage? If we only read a verse or part of a verse, we have no context. We must be very careful to not make claims about a passage of Scripture that the author never intended or that would not be faithful to the true meaning of God's Word.

One of the classic examples of taking a verse completely out of context is found in Jeremiah's letter to the exiles. If you just read Jeremiah 29:11, you might think this is a wonderful promise to claim. God seems to be telling you that He has a wonderful plan for your life—a life of peace with a hopeful future.

So how do we know to whom this verse applies? If we apply the hermeneutical skills we have been using to examine Scripture, all we need to do is ask a few questions. Who is writing this letter? Jeremiah. Who is he writing to? The captives in exile in Babylon. Who is the *you* in verse 11? It is the captives mentioned in verse 4. When will this peaceful prospering begin? Only after 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

So why doesn't anyone claim verse 10 as his life verse? What about verse 17? Could the Apostle Paul have said that Jeremiah 29:11 characterized his life? While all of God's Word is profitable for us (2 Timothy 3:16–17) and the things written in the Old Testament are for our instruction (Romans 15:4) not every verse applies directly to us today. We cannot simply insert our name into a verse wherever we want, nor can we

deny a verse that clearly applies to us. We must look to rightly divide (accurately handle) God's Word and faithfully present what it says (2 Timothy 2:15).

Other clear passages in Scripture talk about God's plans for His children. Romans 8 clearly talks about God's care and love for each believer and gives a firm promise that He will work all things together for good and conform them to the image of Christ until the day of their glorification (Romans 8:28–30). We have confident hope in the promises of God because of His faithful character. We have salvation from our sins because of what Christ has done on our behalf. And we have power to live our lives, whether in peaceful or tumultuous circumstances, through the Holy Spirit. As you teach this lesson, communicate the importance of trusting what God's Word says and not adding our own ideas into the text.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Sovereign Lord, I come with a renewed appreciation for your faithfulness to your people and to me. I am reminded that you are supreme in every way. When things seem out of control and hopeless, with you there is hope. I can ALWAYS trust that you are in complete control. Why do I sometimes lose focus and feel afraid? You want what is best for me! You've reminded me that you use hardships for my good. Speak through me as I communicate this truth to my students today. They each need to know your character in this way, for we all face circumstances that seem hopeless. Help them embrace the hope that you always offer your children. May they see you, Lord, with fresh eyes this week as the God who is completely sovereign, completely faithful, and completely good.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Seventy Years Class Notes

MATERIALS

- Seventy Years Class Notes
- Seventy Years Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. I'll let you know when to fill something in.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see what God had to tell the people through His faithful prophet Jeremiah.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Lesson Theme Posters 10 and 11. For years, Jeremiah had delivered warnings to the people of Judah. The "lion" from the north, Babylon, would come and wipe out the nation. Jeremiah warned the people to turn to God and repent of their evil ways. Jeremiah begged them to give up their false gods so that God's anger would not be brought against them. But they would not listen. God finally judged the people. He brought the wicked King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and Judah.

- Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

Jeremiah 25:11–12

The people in Judah who were not killed by their enemy were taken to Babylon to be servants to the king there.

Today we'll see that God sent His prophet Jeremiah back to the people with another message.

Remember, the people were now in exile, living in Babylon. They didn't know what was coming next. But God knew what He had planned.

And He would soon send His messenger Jeremiah to tell them. Turn to Jeremiah 25:11–12. We'll start there. Jeremiah was speaking these words for God. He was speaking about the people from Judah who were now servants and slaves in Babylon. *Choose a student to read Jeremiah 25:11–12.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Let's answer some questions about this verse, so we can understand it better.

Observe the Text

Desolation: the condition of a place that has been damaged so that it is no longer suitable for people to live there; ruined; made a wasteland.

? Which land was Jeremiah talking about here? *Jeremiah 25:11. Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster 11. Judah.*

? What did God say about the land? What did He call it? *Jeremiah 25:11. A desolation, an astonishment.*

? What do you think this means—that the land was a desolation? *Allow answers.*

The Babylonians had come in and destroyed the land. They had taken over and left the land in a ruin and a waste. The people were moved out of their nation to another. The land was a wasteland.

? Someone read #1 on your class notes. Which answer is correct? *a. Have students circle the correct answer for #1 on their class notes.*

? The people were taken away and made slaves. Who were they serving? *Jeremiah 25:11. The king of Babylon.*

? And Jeremiah told the people how long they would serve the king of Babylon. Who can find that for me? *Jeremiah 25:12. 70 years.*

Seventy years they would be in captivity according to Jeremiah. Complete #2 on your class notes—70. *Have students complete #2 on their class notes. 70.*

? What was going to happen after 70 years of captivity? What was God going to do? *Jeremiah 25:12. Punish the king of Babylon.*

Let's stop here a minute. God sent the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, to Judah as God's judgment and punishment for their sins. The Babylonians left the land of Judah a wasteland. And now God was warning Babylon that after 70 years He was going to punish them.

? It appears someone is arranging events just the way He wants them. Who is that? Who has been controlling all of this history? *God.*

? Someone read #3 on your class notes. How will you answer that? *Punish.*
Have students complete #3 on their class notes.

? So, God was in control. He sent Babylon to punish Judah. And after 70 years, He would punish Babylon. Which attribute describes the control that God has over everything and all of history? *Sovereign.*

SOVEREIGN
(Refer to Attributes Poster)

Discover the Truth

God had sent Jeremiah to Judah to warn the people and to tell them to return to the Lord. But they would not listen. God sent the Babylonians to ruin and waste the land. Many of the Jews were killed by the Babylonians. The people left in Judah were moved to Babylon to serve the king there. They had no idea how long they would be there or if they would EVER get home. But God gave Jeremiah a message—a message that the people would once again return home.

? When would the people return home? How long would God leave His people in Babylon? Look at #2 on your class notes. *70 years.*

Yes, and after 70 years, the sovereign God of the universe would bring His people back to Judah. Not only that, God told them that He would then destroy Babylon—the nation that came in and devastated the land of Judah. God wants us to know for sure, without question, throughout His Word, that He is the sovereign ruler of all of history. This is one clear example of that. God was in control and His Word tells us that.

? Will someone read #4 on your class notes? What is the answer to that? *God.* *Have students complete #4 on their class notes.*



READ THE WORD

Jeremiah was telling of future events when he wrote to the people and told them that they would be in captivity for 70 years. He was giving them information about the future. They would go home one day. That was great news! God was giving the people hope for the future through Jeremiah.

? Take a look at our Roles of the Prophets Poster. Which of these roles was Jeremiah filling when he told the people that their stay in Babylon would be temporary and that they would get to go back to Judah in 70 years? *Told of future events and spoke of hope.*

Jeremiah was a true prophet of God. Some prophets filled more than one role as messengers for God. Jeremiah certainly did. He warned the people about their sin, he told them what would happen in the future, and he gave them hope. But there is even more. God spoke through Jeremiah and gave the people instructions on how to live while they were in captivity. Let's look at Jeremiah 29:4–7. *Choose students to read the verses.*

Jeremiah 29:4–7

EXAMINE THE WORD

These verses are filled with lots of great details. Let's answer some questions about them.

Observe the Text

- ? Starting with verse 4, who spoke through Jeremiah? *The Lord of hosts. Complete #5 on your class notes. Have students fill in #5 on their class notes.*
- ? And who was the Lord speaking to? *All who were taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.*
- ? Right. Take a look at Jeremiah 29:5–6. There are at least five things the Lord was telling the people to do. What were they? *Build houses, plant gardens, take wives, have sons and daughters, increase in numbers.*

He commanded them to settle in Babylon for a time, to build houses, plant gardens, and have families. God knew that one day they were going to come back home to Judah. But, He also knew they would be there for 70 years!

- ? Look at #6 on your class notes. Which of these did the Lord tell the people to do? Circle the answers. *Discuss #6. a, b, e, f. Have students circle the correct answers on their class notes.*
- ? Look at Jeremiah 29:7. The Lord gave two more commands. Can you figure out what they are? *Allow discussion. Seek peace and pray to the Lord.*
- ? Now look at #7 on your class notes. Will someone read that? How will you complete it? *Assign a student to read. Peace, pray. Have students complete #7 on their class notes.*

God told them to seek peace in the city even though these were their enemies. And God told them to pray to the Lord for the people they served—to pray for their enemies.

Jeremiah 29:10

One more verse to read. Jeremiah 29:10. It was God's promise of a hopeful future for His people who were slaves in Babylon. Someone read it for me. *Assign a reader.*

- ? And what was God's promise? *Jeremiah 29:10. After 70 years He would lead them home—to Jerusalem and Judah.*
- ? Will someone read #8 on the class notes? What is the answer? *Home. Have students fill in #8 on their class notes.*

Discover the Truth

God continued to use His prophet, Jeremiah. Jeremiah's prophecy about Babylon had come true. The people were conquered and taken out of the land. And now they were serving the king in Babylon. And God gave further instructions to the people through Jeremiah. He told them to build houses, plant farms, and have families. God wanted the people to increase in number so that when they returned to their land in 70 years, as God promised, there would be plenty of people to fill the land of Judah.





Babylonian Captivity Challenge

MATERIALS

- Babylonian Captivity Challenge Questions Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the class into two teams. Have each team stand in a line in front of you. Read through the questions one at a time allowing the first person in line to answer when it is his turn. You may want the students to find the answers in their Bibles if they don't remember. Scripture references are included on the questions sheet.

Keep track of correct answers. Team members go to the back of the line after answering a question. Keep the pace moving quickly. If time allows, ask the questions again. Repetition is good!

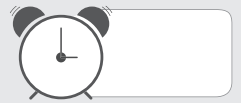
This game might be challenging as we try to answer some questions about what we've been reading about today.

Are you ready for a fun review? *Yes! Begin the game.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Great job everybody! Those questions remind us what we saw in God's Word today. The Lord had used the Babylonians to judge His people. The people would live in Babylon for 70 years until God led them back to their homeland. The people knew that Jeremiah's words could be trusted. He was a prophet of God who spoke the Words of the Lord. And we know today that all the words of the prophet Jeremiah came true!

Encourage the students to go back to their seats and sit down.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The Lord used His faithful prophet Jeremiah to deliver messages from God. He spoke to the people about a lot of things God wanted them to know. He warned the people to turn back to God. He warned them that God would judge and punish them. But they would not listen, so finally God sent the Babylonians to destroy their nation and take them captive.

Jeremiah spoke again for God while the people were in captivity. He told them that the captivity would last for 70 years. He told them the Lord wanted them to live normal lives, to get married and have families until the time came when they would leave Babylon. And he told the people that there would be a day, after the 70 years, that God would lead His people back home.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We serve a powerful, omnipotent, and sovereign God. He is the Creator of the universe. He is in control of everything!

SOVEREIGN

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

God showed His sovereignty through everything that happened to His people in Judah. God warned the people over and over. He finally had to punish them. He brought the Babylonians down on the people of Judah. God warned the people through Jeremiah that He would send King Nebuchadnezzar to Judah. King Nebuchadnezzar would take the land and make it a desolation. This is what happened. God was in control. God rules the kings of all nations.

God then promised the people that they would one day return back to their homeland—after being captives for 70 years. Again, God controlled the events. And after 70 years, God worked in the hearts of men who allowed the people to go home.

God announced another thing through Jeremiah—that after the 70 years, God would punish the people of Babylon for their sins. This happened just like God said it would. God is in control. He rules the hearts of all kings and all nations.

Our God is the same God today. He cannot change! He is immutable! And God not only rules the hearts of all kings and nations, He knows and understands and controls every detail of your life and mine! Look at the bottom of your class notes. Do you see Psalm 115:3? Let's read it together.

Have the students read the verse out loud together.

God is in the heavens and He does all that He pleases. He is a good God and the things He does, even though we may not always understand them, are done for His purposes and according to His will. We can trust this truth. We must trust our holy, omnipotent, good, sovereign God.

Let's read this truth about God one more time from your class notes. Psalm 115:3. It is a short verse, but **PACKED** with truth we need to remember. *Re-read Psalm 115:3.*



Psalm 115:3

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for being a God who never changes.
- Thank God for working all things together for good for those who love Him and have allowed Him to be the Lord of their lives.
- Ask God to help us to trust Him more when we go through bad things in life and to remind us that He always has our best in mind.