



12

Seventy Years

Key Theme

- God is sovereign over all things.

Key Passages

- Jeremiah 25:11–12, 29:4–6, 29:10

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

Students will use the signs posted on the walls to complete their Memory Verse Review Sheets. They will match the numbers on their sheets with the numbers on the signs and fill in the missing words. They will then read and/or recite the verse to the class or to each other.



Activity 1: Seventy Years Class Notes

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



Studying God's Word

God finally judged Judah through King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The survivors of the Babylonian attack were taken to Babylon to be servants. 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: Tic-Tac-Toe Review Game

Students will answer review questions about the lesson to earn an opportunity to make tic-tac-toe.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheets from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Print the eight Memory Verse Review Signs from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Tape the Memory Verse Review Signs to the walls around the room.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student
- Eight Memory Verse Review Signs
- Masking tape



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



TIC-TAC-TOE REVIEW GAME

- Print one Tic-Tac-Toe Review Questions from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Color 5 white paper plates red and 5 white paper plates blue, or purchase two different colored plates.
- With masking tape, put a large tic-tac-toe game pattern on the floor.

- Tic-Tac-Toe Review Questions
- 5 red paper plates
- 5 blue paper plates
- Masking tape



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.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete their Memory Verse Review Sheets by matching the numbers on their sheets with the same numbers on the wall signs to find the missing words. They will then read and/or recite the verse to the class or to each other.

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 for each student
- 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 complete the notes as you teach the lesson.

We will be completing the class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. We'll do it together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we study today and fill in our class notes, we will see that God gave hope to the people from Judah who were slaves in Babylon. God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Lessons 10 and 11 Lesson Theme Posters. Jeremiah had given many, many warnings to the people of Judah. He told the people to turn back to God and repent of their sins. But the people would not listen. He begged them to give up their false gods so that God would not be angry with them. But they still would not listen. So, Jeremiah told the people their land would

- 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.

be destroyed by another nation. God finally judged the people when he sent the wicked Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and Judah. Their land was ruined, the Temple destroyed, and the people who survived were taken away to be slaves.

God had more to say to His people even though they were no longer in their own land. He would give another message to His people through His prophet Jeremiah.

The people were now slaves in Babylon. They were in another country far from their own homeland. Their families and land had been destroyed. They must have been scared and wondering what would happen next. Well, God let them know. He sent a message through His prophet Jeremiah. We'll learn what that message was today. Jeremiah spoke these words to the people from Judah who were now slaves in Babylon. *Read Jeremiah 25:11–12.*

Jeremiah 25:11–12

► Re-read the verses or portions of the verses as necessary to help the students hear the answers directly from the biblical text.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Which land was Jeremiah talking about here? It was the land that we heard about in Lesson 11. It is known as the Southern Kingdom. *Jeremiah 25:11. Refer to the Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster. Judah.*
- ? God said that the land would be a desolation and an astonishment. What do you think that means? Remember what happened to Judah. *Allow discussion. Refer to the Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster.*

It means that the entire nation was destroyed. Desolation means a place that is so destroyed no one can live there. The Babylonians had taken over and put an end to the nation of Judah. And the people left in Judah were taken out of their nation and taken to Babylon.
- ? Now look at #1 on your class notes. What did the Babylonians do to the nation of Judah? Which answer is correct? Circle that picture and answer. *Destroyed the land.*
- ? So, the people were taken away and made slaves. Who were they serving? *Re-read the verse if necessary. Jeremiah 25:11. The king of Babylon.*
- ? And how long did God say the people of Judah would serve the king of Babylon? *Jeremiah 25:12. 70 years.*
- ? OK. Now look at #2 on your class notes. Can someone read the question? *Assign a reader. Which number will you circle? 70.*
- ? And God told them that something would happen when the seventy years were completed. Listen and tell me. *Re-read Jeremiah 25:12 emphasizing "punish the king of Babylon and that nation." Punish the king of Babylon and the nation.*

Yes. God was promising something here. After 70 years the king of Babylon would be punished for what they had done to the people of Judah. God was saying He would punish them because of their sin against Him.

Refer to Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster. But this can get confusing. Remember, God SENT the Chaldeans or Babylonians to Judah to punish them for not obeying Him. The Babylonians destroyed the land of Judah and made it a wasteland. That was what God had planned. But NOW God was warning the Babylonians that after 70 years He was going to punish them.

- ? Who was in control of all of these happenings? *God.*
- ? And who is in control of all that still happens? *God.*
- ? So someone read #3 for us. *Assign a reader if appropriate.* Who was going to be punished after the 70 years of captivity? *Babylonians.* That's right. Circle that picture on your class notes.
- ? God is in control. He sent Babylon to punish Judah. And after 70 years, He would punish Babylon. Which attribute tells us that God has control over everything? *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Sovereign.*
- ? Right. And can someone read #4 on your class notes? *Assign a reader.* Which picture will you circle? *God.*

SOVEREIGN
(Refer to Attributes Poster)

Discover the Truth

God was, and still is, in control. He sent Babylon to punish Judah. And after 70 years, He would punish Babylon.

This was the message of hope that Jeremiah brought to the people who had been brought out of Judah and moved into Babylon. They had no idea how long they would be in Babylon or if they would EVER get to return home. But God gave Jeremiah a message—the message that the people would get to come back to their land.

- ? When would that be? How long would God leave his people in Babylon? Look back at #2 on your class notes.
70 years.



READ THE WORD

Jeremiah told the people what would happen to them in the future. They would be servants in Babylon for 70 years. But, the good news was that they would get to go home one day. God gave the people hope for their future through Jeremiah. Once the 70 years was over, they would get to go back to Judah.

- ? Take a look at our Roles of the Prophets Poster. Which of these roles was Jeremiah filling when He gave the hope-filled message that the people would go home after 70 years in Babylon? *Told of future events and spoke of hope.*

Jeremiah 29:4–6

Refer to the Roles of the Prophets Poster as you discuss. As we look at the poster and think about Jeremiah, we realize that he filled many roles as a prophet. He warned the people about their sin, told them what would happen in the future, and gave them hope. But there is even more. God wanted Jeremiah to tell the people how they should live in Babylon. Listen carefully, and we will discuss the things God told the people to do while captives in the strange land of Babylon. Read Jeremiah 29:4–6 emphasizing the answers to the questions below.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

► Re-read the verses or portions of the verses as necessary to help the students hear the answers directly from the biblical text.

? So whose words was Jeremiah speaking? *Jeremiah 29:4. The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel.*

? The Lord was speaking through Jeremiah. And who was the Lord talking to? *Jeremiah 29:4. All who were taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.*

This was a special message just for the people who had been taken from their homes and moved to Babylon.

? Now look at #5. Can someone read that? *Assign a reader.* Which word will complete that sentence? Look at the word bank for help. *Taken.*

So, let's go back and see what exactly the Lord wanted the people to do. We'll go one verse at a time. Listen to this. *Re-read Jeremiah 29:5.*

? Now, based on what I just read, look at #6 on your class notes. How will you complete that? Use the words in the word bank for help. *Houses, plant.*

OK. So they were going to build houses and plant gardens. Listen to Jeremiah 29:6. Tell me what the Lord is telling the people to do here. *Re-read Jeremiah 29:6.*

? So, what did all that mean? Anyone know? *Allow discussion.*

The Lord wanted the people to get married, take wives, have sons and daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters. The Lord wanted the people to have families and to grow in strength and number.

? Now look at #7 on your class notes. Can someone read that for us? How will you complete that statement? Again you will fill in two words from the word bank. *Married, families.*

So, God wanted them to build houses, plant gardens, get married, and have families with lots of children. God wanted them to get comfortable in Babylon and go back to living their regular lives.

The people would be living there for a long time. But God didn't want them to get discouraged. And He gave them another promise. Listen to Jeremiah 29:10. Tell me if you can figure out what God promised the people. *Read Jeremiah 29:10.*

Jeremiah 29:10

? What was God’s promise to the people? *Jeremiah 29:10. Allow discussion.*

God was promising them that after 70 years were completed in Babylon, He would cause them to return to Judah, their home.

? Someone read #8 on the class notes for us. *Assign a reader.* How will you complete that? *Home.*

Discover the Truth

God used His prophet Jeremiah many times. What Jeremiah said about Babylon had come true. The people were conquered and taken out of the land. And now they were serving the king of Babylon. But God had a plan for their future. He told them to build houses, plant farms, and have families. God wanted the people to have big families and live normal lives.

And God gave them a message of hope. They would not be in Babylon forever. Seventy years is a long time, but one day the people would return home to Judah—their homeland.



Tic-Tac-Toe Review Game

MATERIALS

- Masking tape
- 5 blue paper plates
- 5 red paper plates
- Tic-Tac-Toe Review Questions

INSTRUCTIONS

Using masking tape, put a tic-tac-toe grid pattern on the floor large enough for a paper plate to fit inside each square. Divide the class into two teams—blue or red. Ask each team a question. If Blue Team answers correctly, they can play a plate on the tic-tac-toe grid. If the team cannot answer correctly, allow Red Team to answer. If no one gets the answer, give the correct answer and repeat the question later. Repeat the process above until a team gets tic-tac-toe. Continue play as time allows. Encourage the students to look at their class notes, the Lesson Theme Poster, and other posters that may help them during the game.

Today we’ll be playing tic-tac-toe to review our lesson. I hope you were paying attention during today’s lesson so you’ll

know all of the answers! We’ll have two teams—a red team and a blue team. Each team can place a paper plate onto the tic-tac-toe game for every question you answer correctly. Let’s see who can get tic-tac-toe first! *Play the game.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Great job, everybody! We learned a lot today. The Lord used the Babylonians to punish His people. The people from Judah 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

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

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

SOVEREIGN

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

We serve a sovereign God! God showed His sovereignty in this whole account. The kings did nothing to surprise God. God knew what was going to happen every step of the way—even that the people would return to Judah after 70 years. Everything happened just like God said it would. God is in control. He rules the hearts of all kings and all nations.

IMMUTABLE

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

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!

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

The Bible says, "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.



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 in control over everything.
- Thank God for his perfect plan for our lives.
- Ask God to help us to trust Him.
- Pray that God will give us hearts to worship Him alone.