

Teaching Guide



*ADULT BIBLE STUDY
IN BASIC ENGLISH*

**ISAIAH
AND
JEREMIAH**

Julia Wrotenbery

BAPTISTWAY

Dallas, Texas

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN BASIC ENGLISH
TEACHING GUIDE
ISAIAH and JEREMIAH**

Copyright © November 2002 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®.
All rights reserved.

Permission is granted for a church to make as many copies of this publication as needed for use within its ministry. Copies of this publication are not to be sold, distributed, or used in any other manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations. For information, contact BAPTISTWAY PRESS, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 North Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW LIFE Version, Copyright © 1969, 1976, 1978, 1983, 1986, Christian Literature International, P. O. Box 777, Canby, OR 97013. Used by permission. Identified by “N.L.V.”

First edition: November 2002.

BAPTISTWAY Management Team

Executive Director, Baptist General Convention of Texas: Charles Wade
Coordinator, Church Health and Growth Section: H. Lynn Eckeberger
Director, Bible Study/Discipleship Center: Dennis Parrott
Administrator, Curriculum Development Office: Bernard M. Spooner
Publishing consultant: Ross West, Positive Difference Communications

Language Materials Team

Writer for Adult Bible Study in Basic English Teaching Procedures, Units 1-4

Julia Wrotenbery, University Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas

Editor for Units 1-4

Cindy Dake, First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Facilitator for the Adult Basic English Team

Joe Bruce, Project Director, Texas Partnerships Resource Center, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Patty Lane, Director, Office of Intercultural Initiatives, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Nelda P. Williams, Facilitators Coordinator and Manager, Curriculum Development Office

Adult Bible Study in Basic English—Teaching Guide

ISAIAH AND JEREMIAH

Introduction for Teachers

The purpose of this teaching guide is to provide teachers with a plan for teaching a quality Bible lesson while helping participants improve their English language skills. Use of this material is suggested for International Sunday School classes or any Bible study group taught at a Basic English level.

The teaching guide begins with listings of the Lesson Focus, Focal/Background Text, and Memory Verse, all of which provide the premise for the lesson. This information is followed by a teaching plan under headings of Connect with Life, Guide the Study, and Encourage Application. At the end of each lesson, Supplemental Teaching Ideas are provided under those same headings. As the teacher, you may pick and choose from these helps to use along with the student's Study Guide to fit the lesson to your class members' abilities and needs.

The Bible text printed in the lesson material is from the NEW LIFE Version of the Bible (NLV), an inexpensive translation (not a paraphrase) which uses only an 850-word vocabulary. The NLV is available from Christian Literature International, P. O. Box 777, Canby, Oregon 97013; e-mail christian@canby.com; telephone (orders only) 1-800-324-9734.

The NLV Bible often uses simplified phrases to express terms generally familiar to anyone raised in a Christian environment. In the Teaching Guide, these terms will usually be expressed using the NLV terminology, followed by the more common term in parentheses; for example, "proud religious law-keeper (Pharisee)" or "early preacher (prophet)." The teacher has the option of using the NLV term for new Christians or beginning students, or the common term where it will be better understood and less cumbersome in teaching. Once a word or phrase has been introduced in the Word List or teaching procedures, however, the familiar expression may be used to help students add it to their vocabulary.

Prayer is sometimes specifically suggested in the teaching procedures. It should be an integral part of your lesson plan. Use your own judgment as to where it best fits into the teaching session.

The writers and editors wish you success and give you prayerful support in your teaching of this Adult Bible Study in Basic English.

Bible Study in Basic English is published by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and follows the same curriculum plan as the Bible Study for Texas materials, but has no Texas emphasis. Teachers may wish to purchase Bible Study for Texas lesson comments and teaching guides (\$1.95 each per quarter) as additional resources. These may be ordered through your church or directly from the Sunday School/Discipleship Division, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 North Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798, e-mail baptistway@bgct.org; FAX 214-828-5187; or toll-free telephone 1-800-355-5285.

About the writer

Julia Wrotenbery is a member of University Baptist Church in Fort Worth. She retired from a 30-year career teaching high school English in several Texas cities. She has been working with the ESL program at her church for seven years. She graduated from Baylor University, University of Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She is married to Carl Wrotenbery, Dean of Libraries Emeritus, Southwestern Seminary.

Teaching Guide

Unit 1 Isaiah: Proclaiming God's Salvation Lesson 1 *Confessing Our Need for God*

Lesson Focus

We need to recognize our sins and confess them to God.

Focal Text

Isaiah 64:1-9

Background Text

Isaiah 63:7-64:12

Memory Verse

“But now, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay and You are our pot maker.” —Isaiah 64:8a (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ask someone to read aloud the introductory section about childhood responsibilities. Or before the session, ask someone to summarize it for the group. Ask the class to share experiences in which they may have needed to confess and apologize for actions or words that were not appropriate. Discuss how hard this is to do sometimes. Remind them that we often do things which displease God. When that happens we need to admit our guilt to God and ask for help from Him.

Guide the Study

2. Say: *Isaiah pictures a people who have turned away from God and forgotten to keep His laws. In these verses Isaiah confesses to God the sins of the people and begs God to come among them and bring them back to Him.*

Ask two students to read Isaiah 64:1-3 and another to read Judges 5:5. (Distribute Verse Strips from next page.)

3. Have a student refer to Study Guide and read

paragraphs 1 and 2 in the “Calling on God’s Power” section.

4. Ask for a volunteer to read Isaiah 64:4.

Now ask someone to read paragraphs 1 and 2 under the heading “God’s Singular Power.”

5. Have a student read Isaiah 64:5-7.

Read to the class paragraphs 3 and 4 under “A Time to Confess.” Point out how much like Israel we are today in our straying away from God and needing to repent and confess.

6. Ask a student to read Isaiah 64:8-9. Explain: *Potters still make pottery in a similar way to the way the biblical pots were made. Most likely, a simple potter’s wheel was used. The clay was conditioned by treading with the feet and then by kneading with the hands. When it was ready to be worked, it was placed on a wheel. By Isaiah’s time, this probably had a foot pedal to turn the wheel. The potter then shaped the vessel with his hands or with a shaping instrument. If it did not please him, he could reshape it. Then it was dried and made ready to use. Pottery was a very important product in biblical times.*

7. Ask a student to read the first four paragraphs under “God Molding His People.” Discuss.

Encourage Application

8. Read and discuss paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 under the heading “Calling on God’s Power.” Try to get the group to share something about how they pray. If they are reluctant, be prepared to share some of your own experiences or those of people you know.

9. Have the class discuss the questions in “Things to Think About.” Encourage each student to contribute their opinion in some way.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Focus on the word *CONFESSION*. Ask the class what kinds of activity this word brings to mind. (Possibly a criminal admitting to a crime, anyone admitting he has made a mistake, confession to a priest as practiced by Catholics, public confession of faith as practiced in Baptist churches) Tell the class that today we are going to concentrate on confession to God.

Encourage Application

1. Ask the class to work in pairs to memorize the Memory Verse. Have them say it to each other. Then have the whole class recite it together.
2. Make sure your students understand the new vocabulary words, as well as any other difficult words in the Study Guide.
3. Close with a prayer of confession for the group. If the group seems ready for it, ask for volunteers to lead. Make sure to emphasize the need we all have for regular prayers of confession to God.

Verse Strips

(Cut apart and distribute to two students)

Isaiah 64:1-3

1: If only You would tear open the heavens and come down! The mountains would shake before You,

2: as when fire burns the wood and causes the water to boil. Come and make Your name known to those who are against You, that the nations may shake in fear before You!

3: When You did powerful things which we did not expect, You came down, and the mountains shook before You.

Judges 5:5

The mountains shook before the Lord. Mount Sinai shook before the Lord, the God of Israel.

Teaching Guide

Unit 1 Isaiah: Proclaiming God's Salvation Lesson 2 *Receiving Good News from God*

Lesson Focus

God offers us hope and comfort, but we must accept His hope and comfort if we want to be helped.

Focal Text

Isaiah 40:1-11

Background Text

Isaiah 40:1-11

Memory Verse

“He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in His arms and carry them close to His heart. He will be gentle in leading those that are with young.” Isaiah 40:11 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ask your group of students: *Do any of you come from countries which raise sheep? What kinds of areas would you find sheep in? In Texas, sheep are raised in Southwest Texas and in the Hill Country, although they are fewer than cattle. What are some of the characteristics of sheep? (They are gentle, not good at protecting themselves from wolves or mountain lions or even coyotes. They are not skillful in finding good pastures for themselves. If not watched, they will eat too much and make themselves ill or eat poisonous plants. They need a leader, usually not one of themselves but one who can plan and think ahead. The young are particularly vulnerable and must be watched over.)*

Say: In our lesson today, we are compared to sheep, with God as our shepherd. Watch for ways we are like these sheep described.

Guide the Study

2. Ask one of the students to read Isaiah 40:1-2.

Explain: *Much of Isaiah is devoted to warning the people of punishment for their sins. This passage gives hope that the punishment is not the end of the story.*

3. Have a volunteer read the first two paragraphs under “A Time to Rest in God’s Goodness” in the Study Guide. Make sure everyone understands that these words refer to future events, but there is no time table given.

4. Ask someone to read Isaiah 40:3-5. Explain: *Again these verses refer to future events. They are also poetic which makes them hard to interpret. This upheaval of the earth must show activities in the end times, especially in verse 5 with its reference to all flesh seeing God at one time. The important thing to remember is that these are meant to reassure and to comfort God’s people through the difficult times immediately before them.*

5. Ask someone to read the first paragraph from the Study Guide under the heading “Admitting Our Weakness before God.” Then ask someone to read Isaiah 40:6-8. Point out: *We know from observation that the things of earth do not last beyond a certain time. Flowers bloom and die; grass turns green and withers. Even people have a limited life span. But God wants us to know for sure that He does not wither and die. Only He will stand forever.*

6. Ask someone to read Isaiah 40:9-10. Now have someone read the first two paragraphs under the heading “Being a Witness to God’s Greatness.” Point out to the class: *Isaiah was speaking to his own people about things to come. It is important to remember that all Christians are a part of these prophecies.*

Refer to Romans 11:17: “But some of the branches (who are the Jews) were broken off. You who are not Jews were put in the place where the branches had been broken off. Now you are sharing the rich root of the olive tree.”

Also refer to Galatians 3:28-29: “God does not see you as a Jew or as a Greek. He does not see you as a person sold to work or as a person free to work. He does not see you as a man or as a woman. You are all one in Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you have become the true children of Abraham. What God promised to him is now yours.” (References from New Life Version)

7. Request that someone volunteer to read the last verse of the passage, Isaiah 40:11.

Then ask for someone to read the paragraphs under the heading, “Securely Placed in His Hands.”

Ask for volunteers to look up and read aloud: Micah 2:12; Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:11.

Ask: *What characteristics of shepherds do we find in these passages? Let's compare these passages with John 10:11-16 where Christ describes Himself as the Good Shepherd.*

Encourage Application

8. Lead the class in discussing “Things to Think About.”

9. Ask someone to read aloud paragraphs 3, 4, 5 under the heading, “Being a Witness to God’s Greatness.”

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Read together the Psalm 23. Discuss the characteristics of the sheep and the shepherd: *How do the sheep compare to us as a people? How does God compare to the shepherd? These words of comfort remind us of the passage we are studying today. God offers us comfort, and He leads us and loves us a good shepherd would feel toward his sheep.*

2. Consider playing the section from the “Messiah” which deals with the 40th chapter of the book of Isaiah. This piece of music is played all over the world and has been for 300 years. Many generations have found hope in the words “Comfort ye; comfort ye my people.”

Tell the class: *Today we are going to examine*

these verses from Isaiah because they speak to us today just as they spoke to the Israelites centuries ago.

Encourage Application

1. Let the class work together in groups to learn the Memory Verse, Isaiah 40:11. Have them say it to each other. Then ask everyone to recite it together.

2. Go over the Word List. Make sure everyone understands the words. Check to see if there are any other words they have questions about.

3. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving that God has provided these comforting passages for us and that He is the one stable being in our chaotic world.

Teaching Guide

Unit 1 Isaiah: Proclaiming God's Salvation Lesson 3 *Enjoying God's Blessings*

Lesson Focus

Christians can recognize and celebrate the many blessings of God.

Focal/Background Text

Isaiah 61

Memory Verse

"I will have much joy in the Lord. My soul will have joy in my God, for He has clothed me with the clothes of His saving power."

Isaiah 61:10a (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Say to the class: *One of the most beloved songs of our faith is "Joy to the World." Though we typically think of it as a Christmas carol, its timeless truths are worth considering any time of the year. This song reflects the spirit of this passage in Isaiah which we study today. Let's look at the words of this carol. (Show the words on a poster board, an overhead projector, or make copies to pass out):*

Joy to the world; the Lord has come.
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth; the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
And thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.

(If the group knows this song, sing it together. Or enlist a soloist sing for them. Or play a cassette recording of the song.)

Say: Many centuries before this song was written, Isaiah was urging to people to recognize and enjoy the blessings God continually sends us.

Guide the Study

2. Ask someone to read Isaiah 61:1-3. Point out: *Many parts of Isaiah foretell of God's wrath and punishment for those who have turned their backs on Him. In this chapter, Isaiah offers hope that God will forgive us if we return to Him and will fill us with the desire to praise Him.*

3. Now ask someone read the first three paragraphs under the heading "God's Great Task for Isaiah" in the Study Guide.

4. Have a student read Isaiah 61:4-7. Then ask someone to read the three paragraphs under "God's Special Job for Us."

Say to the class: God promises joy and blessings, but He also expects certain things from us. Isaiah addresses the people of Israel, but the words are also meant for Christians today as we take our place as children of promise.

5. Request a student to read Isaiah 61:8-9. Say to the class: *In these verses Isaiah lists for us what God loves and what God hates. How would you express those two ideas? (God loves what is right and fair. He hates stealing and what is wrong.)*

On a chalk board, list some of the class's ideas of what God considers "right" and "wrong," basing it on what we have already studied in the Old

Testament and what you remember from the New Testament.

Say: *If we live by God's standards, what does verse 9 promise to us?* (All will know us as God's people whom He has honored.)

6. Ask a student to read Isaiah 61:10-11. Say: *Isaiah uses two familiar references to compare to the joy he feels in the Lord. What are these?* (The bride and groom at a wedding and the blooming of a garden.) At this point you may want to talk about wedding customs in various cultures and the joyous celebrations involved in them. This is how we feel when we are immersed in God's love. Consider showing pictures of gardens or beautiful landscapes and talk about how these scenes make our hearts rejoice.

Encourage Application

8. Lead the class in discussing the questions in "Things to Think About."

9. Copy or cut out the sidebar at right, "God's Blessings." Give it to a student to read aloud.
Close with prayer.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Say to the class: The title of the lesson is "Enjoying God's Blessings." Isaiah 61:1 begins "The Spirit of the Lord God is on me, because the Lord has chosen me to bring good news to poor people. He has sent me to heal those with a sad heart." Before we begin to study the scriptures let's try to think of problems throughout the world which leave people with sad hearts. Let's begin in your own homelands. (List situations on a chalk board or chart.) Since you have been in this country, what problems do you find which leave people with sad hearts? (List these also if any new ones are offered.) Isaiah claims he has good news to help people gain God's blessings and to rejoice in them. We know that the ultimate blessing is the coming of Christ, the Son of God, who can cleanse us of sin and place us in a right relationship with God. Isaiah looks forward to that time.

Encourage Application

1. Go over the vocabulary words. Check to see if there are others which need explaining.
2. In pairs have the students practice saying the Memory Verse to each other. Then ask everyone to say it together.
3. Close by leading the class in singing the chorus referred to at the end of the lesson in the Study Guide, "God Is So Good."

God's Blessings

God's blessings are based on our repentance. We cannot expect God to bless our lives when we remain unfaithful to Him. We recognize His blessings as we grow in our faith. Many times we will realize that even the tough times of life can teach us. These hard times can become blessings in our lives.

In Old Testament times, God urged His people to come back to Him to ask forgiveness. In Deuteronomy, God urges us to come back to Him. Once we return, the lesson from Deuteronomy tells us that we will receive great blessings from Him.

Teaching Guide

Unit 1 Isaiah: Proclaiming God's Salvation Lesson 4 Celebrating a Baby's Birth!

Lesson Focus

The birth of this one baby brings the hope of salvation to all people.

Focal Text

Isaiah 9:1-7

Background Text

Isaiah 8:21—9:7

Memory Verse

““For unto us a Child will be born. To us a Son will be given. And the rule of the nations will be on His shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Teacher, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.”
Isaiah 9:6 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. If your class is made up of married people who have children or grandchildren, ask for memories of how they felt about the birth of a baby. If it is a younger group of unmarried people, bring some pictures of babies, especially newborns and their families. Talk about the joy and excitement people feel over the birth of a baby. Point out that most people think their child is superior to all others.

Say: Suppose that you had received assurances that your child would be the greatest person who ever lived and that all the world would be blessed through him. What we are looking at today tells of just such a child to be born.

Guide the Study

2. Invite a student to read Isaiah 9:1-3. Point out: *Naphtali was bordered on the east by the Jordan River and at its southern tip the Sea of Galilee. Zebulun was immediately west and south of Naphtali and much smaller. These were two of the*

original tribal groups named for two of the sons of Jacob (renamed Israel). These two were among the areas captured by Assyria and made a part of its empire about 733 BC. Isaiah indicates that God has great plans for this area which in Jesus' time is called Galilee. It is in the area of Galilee that Jesus grew up. In verse 2 Isaiah refers to the darkness of the past contrasted with the light that is to come. This is a reference to the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, who will bring changes.

3. Ask someone to read Isaiah 9:4-5. Ask: *What would these symbols show: breaking the heavy load from their necks, burning the soldiers' shoes and the coats covered in blood?* (The first symbol promises freedom from oppression. The second promises peace rather than war.)

4. Now have someone read Isaiah 9:6-7. Ask: *What is promised in verse 6?* (A Child, a Son)

What is He to do in verse 6? (Bear the just rule of all nations on His shoulders.)

What are the names He will be called? (Wonderful, Teacher, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.)

Ask the group to discuss what they think these names mean.

5. Now ask: *In verse 7 how long are we told His rule will last? Notice that the Jewish people tended to interpret this as referring to the nation of Israel. They seemed to lose sight of the concept of a baby being born. They expected a mighty war leader who would free them from their enemies and make them rulers for all time.*

6. Ask someone to read from the Study Guide the 4th paragraph under the heading “The Greatest Story Will Be Told.” It begins “The whole Christian movement....” Point out the reference to God's giving “part of Himself.” We do not worship a trio of Gods but a single God Who encompasses the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Encourage Application

7. Follow the ideas in the last paragraph before the Scripture passage begins. Discuss some ways to express the love of God through Christ. Are there ways your class can express to others the love which Christ shows us? (Personal witnessing, right living, attending church and Bible studies, working as a volunteer in a shelter or a food dispensing organization, cooperating with Habitat for Humanity or other such organizations, etc.)

8. Lead a discussion of the “Things to Think About” section in the Study Guide.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class to name some great world leaders and what they did for mankind. Examples might include:

Abraham Lincoln, ending slavery in America

Mother Teresa, ministering to the poor

Louis Pasteur, improving public health by

discovering that pasteurized milk was safer

Jonas Salk, finding a vaccine to prevent polio

Say: The passage we are reading today from Isaiah shows us a preview of the greatest leader of all—Jesus Christ—and what He will do for the whole world.

Encourage Application

1. Go over the Word List in the Study Guide. Be sure that all students understand the meanings. Check to see if there are other words they do not know.

2. Ask the group to work together to learn the Memory Verse. Recite it together.

3. Today's lesson emphasizes the Christmas application, but you may be teaching the lesson at some other time of year. If so, guide your class in thinking of ways the ideas can be applied all the year.

Some churches emphasize giving to mission causes at Christmas. Missions are just as important

the rest of the year. Organizations like Texas Baptists' Buckner Benevolences not only need money all year, but there are many projects which your group might consider doing to help.

Close with prayer asking God's guidance in how to celebrate the birth of Christ most effectively all year long.

Teaching Guide

Unit 1 Isaiah: Proclaiming God's Salvation Lesson 5 *Trusting in God's Promises*

Lesson Focus

God has made promises which He expects us to trust.

Focal/Background Text

Isaiah 62

Memory Verse

“Look, the One Who saves you is coming! See, He is bringing with Him the pay He is to give.” Isaiah 62:11 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ahead of time, cut out the reading entitled, “God’s Glory” (see next page) and give it to a student to read aloud.
2. Begin class time by saying: *Your Study Guide mentions various kinds of celebrations which people like to engage in to commemorate some special event. What are some of the special celebrations in your country? (Try to involve as many of the group as possible. If this lesson is done at Christmas time, ask if there are special observances of Christmas that are particular to their own area. Such things as the Posada in Mexico or the elaborate outdoor miniature nativity scenes.)*
3. Explain to the class: *Today we are thinking about God’s promises for the future.*
Call on the person selected to read “God’s Glory.”

Guide the Study

4. Lead a discussion of the material in the Study Guide under “Understanding the Background of Isaiah 62.” Have parts of this read aloud if necessary. Check to see if there are any questions.

Make sure the class understands that in light of the New Testament and Christ’s sacrifice for us, all Christians are God’s children (Zion).

5. Ask someone to read Isaiah 62:1-2. Point out: *We do not know just what this mysterious name is, but Revelation 2:17 also refers to God giving us new names.* Ask someone to read that verse.

Say: *What we do know is that God cares for us and will reward us so that others can see how much God loves His children.*

6. Now invite a student to read Isaiah 62:3-5. Say: *What comparisons does the passage use to express God’s joy? (The awarding of a crown and the celebration of marriage)* If time permits, ask for a description of the marriage celebration in some of the countries represented. Point out that great joy seems to be the chief emotion.

Optional: If your class is using a version of the Bible that includes reference to Hephzibah and Beulah in verse 4, you may want to take time to give the following explanations. The word “Hephzibah” is translated as “my delight is in her.” The name “Beulah” means “married” and signifies the happy, blessed new relationship of the people to their Lord. We see a New Testament parallel in Ephesians 5:23-27 as Christ is pictured as the groom Who lovingly cares and sacrifices for His bride, the church. We sing the song about Beulah Land and yet don’t often consider the meaning of the lyrics. Beulah Land represents a time when we will be in the presence of the Lord, experiencing the blessings and pleasures of that completed relationship. Presently, our understanding of the full work of God is dim and distorted (as Paul describes in the last two verses of 1 Corinthians 13). But someday, we will have a clear picture of Beulah Land. We presently know it will be wonderful. Someday, we will really experience it in the complete joy it will bring.

7. Have someone read Isaiah 62:6-7. Point out that Jerusalem was a walled city. There would have been

watchtowers along the top with watchmen to warn of danger. Have someone read the first paragraph under "Time to Call on the Lord" in your Study Guide. Discuss.

8. Ask a student to read Isaiah 62:8-9. Ask: *What do you think it would mean for God to swear by His right hand and His strong arm?* (For most people, the right hand is dominant. The most used hand and the strong arm refer to God's might and the fact that we can depend on Him.)

Point out: *These events must be in the future, the fulfillment of God's promises to His people. How would you summarize what God is saying to us?* (I promise that from that point on all my people will profit from their labors and enjoy the fruits of their labors as they praise Me.)

9. Let a volunteer read Isaiah 62:10-12. Point out: *The people that Isaiah originally delivered this message to are those who are still in captivity in Babylon. Now the preparations must be made for returning. Those who are already there are to help smooth the way. For its application to end times, we need to see the redeemed of all ages gathered under God's banner. Prophets often mixed prophecies of immediate application with those which would be fulfilled later.*

Encourage Application

10. Discuss "Things to Think About."

11. Ask someone to read aloud the last paragraph under the heading "Time for the Earth to Hear the News." Close with prayer.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class: *How dependable are promises?* (It depends on the one who makes the promise.)

Suggest these situations for discussion:

(1) A neighbor asks to borrow your lawnmower while his is being repaired. He promises to return it in two hours. The last time he borrowed something, he broke it and did not offer to replace it or pay to

have it repaired.

(2) Your sister asks to borrow your car for an afternoon. You know she is a careful driver. She promises to return it at a certain time.

(3) Your employee has been late to work for the last two weeks. Each time he promises it will not happen again.

Compare these situations to this question: *Can we trust in God's promises? Why?*

Encourage Application

1. Work together to memorize the Memory Verse. Ask for volunteers to say it to the class. Then have everyone repeat it together.

2. Examine the Word List of vocabulary words. Discuss them as necessary. Ask if there are other words in the lesson which may need explanation.

3. Close with a prayer that we may be diligent watchmen with continual prayers to God until the end times fulfill His promises.

God's Glory

The longer time we have to grow in Christ, the more we understand the idea of "the glory of the Lord." We cannot simplify the concept of the glory of the Lord. We cannot define it in just a few words. The glory of the Lord has to do with the indescribable, majestic power of God. We are not what gives God His glory. We are not what makes Him glorious. The glory is already in Him. We are witnesses to His glory. One day when we are with Him in heaven, we will see His glory for all that it truly is.

Teaching Guide

Unit 2 Isaiah's Servant Songs Lesson 6 *A Light to the Nations*

Lesson Focus

It is the mission of God's Servant, Jesus, to bring to the whole world both justice and salvation.

Focal/Background Text

Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Memory Verse

"I will also make You a light to the nations, so that men over all the earth can be saved from the punishment of their sins." Isaiah 49:6b (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Say to the class: *Think for a few moments about the world we live in. Are there individuals and groups who need help? What kinds of situations can you mention specifically?* (Eminent starvation in Zimbabwe and in other countries; natural disasters such as floods, fires, and earthquakes; religious extremists who kill those of other religions in many countries, etc.)

How can we help? Can we provide all the help needed? If we cannot, then we need to trust God to show us who we can help and how much we can give of ourselves and our resources.

Guide the Study

2. Ask several students to read aloud the six paragraphs under "Getting a Perspective on the Material" in the Study Guide. This material helps us to connect the passages we have for today.

3. Now have someone read Isaiah 42:1-4. Ask: *Who is the Servant?* (Jesus, Who will be born 700 years after Isaiah's time.)

What does verse 1 say His function will be? (Show to all nations what is right and what is

wrong, i.e., show the way of salvation.)

Verse 2 and part of verse 3 tell us what He will not do. What are those actions? (He won't yell, but will speak with a quiet voice. He will not be unmerciful to the person who is a broken branch or a little fire, that is to those who are weak and not doing all they could do.)

According to the last part of verse 3, what will He do? (He will make everything fair, and He will be faithful.)

What do we learn from verse 4? (He will be strong enough to keep working until He has made everything on earth right.)

4. Ask a student to read Isaiah 49:1-3. Now have someone read the paragraphs in the Study Guide under "God's Plan Is Carried Out Perfectly."

5. Have another student read Isaiah 49:4-6. Notice here the challenge which is given as the task is enlarged. Ask someone to read the paragraphs under "God's Holy Display." Discuss these ideas.

Ask: If we are to be God's servants, what does He want us to do?

6. Now invite a volunteer to read Isaiah 50:4-6. Ask the class these questions: *For what purpose has God granted the Servant a tongue?* (to speak to the tired to renew their strength)

For what is the Servant to use His ears? (to listen to those who need help) Notice that the Servant obeys God and does not turn back.

7. Ask someone to read Isaiah 50:7-9. Ask: *What suffering must the Servant undergo?* (He is beaten, has His hair pulled out, is spit upon.)

How does He react? (God helps Him to not feel shame. God makes Him feel He is right. God helps Him. He knows He is not guilty and that He will endure while the tormentors pass off the scene.)

8. Have a student read Isaiah 50:10-11. Now have someone read the two paragraphs in the Study

Guide under the heading “His Light Makes All the Difference.”

Encourage Application

9. Discuss “Things to Think About.”

10. Cut out the sidebar article at right (A Picture of God) and give to a student to read aloud. Close with prayer thanking God for the light He sends us and for Jesus Who was willing to be the Suffering Servant.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Tell the class: *Imagine yourself a tourist in a place like Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. The guide takes you deep below the surface and points out the magnificent stalagmites and stalactites. When you reach one large room, the guide tells you to stand perfectly still because the lights will be turned out, and it would be dangerous to move. He does this to show how absolute the darkness is. You would not be able to see your hand move before your eyes. Nor could you tell if one of the group moved except by sound. The pupils of your eyes would dilate to their fullest extent trying to see, but you would not be able to do so. Then the guide lights a match or a small flashlight. It is truly amazing what a difference even a little bit of light can make. When the full lights come back on you will find they seem far brighter than before. Without light, we cannot see. Today's lesson points to the One Who is to be the spiritual light for the whole world, the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ.*

Encourage Application

1. Go over the Word List. Be sure everyone understands the meaning of these words. Check to see if there are other words which need attention.
2. Work with the class to learn the Memory Verse. Ask everyone to say it together. Close with prayer that we might walk in the light given by Jesus and that we may help others to see the light.

A Picture of God

Isaiah 42, 49, and 50 send a clear message to us today. Chapter 42 emphasizes that God will fulfill His covenant promises with His actions. Chapters 49 and 50 talk about One Who would be a Savior of all, not just for the Jewish people. Some of the Jews of the day were offended by these words. They wrongly believed that God loved only them, or that He loved them best.

The book of Isaiah carefully seams together a picture of God that portrays His character as well as His good works. The book allows us to see that God will confidently accomplish what He sets out to do.

Teaching Guide

Unit 2 Isaiah's Servant Songs Lesson 7 Healed by His Wounds

Lesson Focus

It is through Christ's suffering that our salvation comes.

Focal Text

Isaiah 53:1-12

Background Text

Isaiah 52:13—53:12

Memory Verse

"All of us like sheep have gone the wrong way. Each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has put on Him the sin of us all." Isaiah 53:6 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Explain to the class: *Execution of criminals throughout history has often assumed a cruel and vindictive attitude. We hope our system is more fair and just, but many countries still inflict public humiliation and suffering. Imagine a situation where a condemned person was to be publicly beaten. Perhaps the crowd was at liberty to throw rotten fruit at him, to jeer, to spit on him—in addition to the public beating which was to leave his back raw and bleeding. Now try to imagine someone who loved that person enough to volunteer to take his place and to suffer for him, even to the point of giving up his own life. What could possibly inspire someone to do this? This is a love greater than any ever told before.*

Our lesson today shows that God's Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, was willing to do this to take away our sin and guilt and to save us from this punishment.

Guide the Study

2. Before the class session, ask a student to read Isaiah 52:13-15 so that he can summarize it for

the class. Ask for his summary at this point in the class session.

Tell the class: *Notice that this is God's plan and it is unbelievable. What do we learn about the Servant in these verses?* (He will do well; He will be lifted up and honored. He is physically unattractive, but He will surprise even the kings.)

3. Ask a student to read Isaiah 53:1-3. Ask: *What do we learn about the Servant in these verses?* (He grew up in difficult circumstances. There was no physical beauty in Him. He was hated and avoided.)

4. Now ask the class to look at the second paragraph under the heading, "Our King Was a Man of Sorrows," as you or a student read it aloud.

5. Have someone read Isaiah 53:4-5. Ask: *What did the Servant do for us?* (Took on Himself our troubles, carried our sorrows)

Who permitted this punishment? (God Himself)

Why would He do that? (The Servant was hurt, crushed, punished, beaten so that He could pay the price for our sins and bring us peace and healing.)

6. Look at Isaiah 53:6. Ask the class to read it aloud together. Explain: *This is one of the most quoted verses in the Bible because it explains why the Servant had to suffer. Our sin was so deep and ingrown that nothing we could do would be enough to make things right with God.*

7. Ask someone to read Isaiah 53:7-9. Ask: *What reaction did the Servant show during all this unjust suffering?* (He did not cry out or beg for mercy and say that it was unfair. He suffered silently.)

Now request that one of the students read the two paragraphs under the heading "He Could Have Walked Away from the Pain" in the Study Guide.

8. Invite a student to read Isaiah 53:10-12. Point out: *This is God's will, but notice that the Servant is part*

of God. Thus God is not punishing a completely separate being as we would if we were to authorize our own child to undergo such suffering. He is enduring the suffering Himself. The Servant Himself will feel rewarded so that God is actually pleased with the result of His own suffering. In verse 12 how is the Servant rewarded? (He will have a share among the great because He voluntarily gave His life in order to save us from our sins.)

9. Have someone read the paragraphs under “Jesus Accepted and Followed God’s Will.”

Encourage Application

10. Discuss “Things to Think About.”

11. Cut out and give the sidebar below (Paradox of Faith) to a student to read. (Define *paradox* as a statement that seems contrary to common sense, yet is apparently true.) Close with prayer that we can share the Good News with those around us.

Paradox of Faith

We have a paradox when considering the work of Jesus in our world. Isaiah 56 says we are healed from the same punishment Jesus received. Amazingly, we are healed by the wounds He accepted for us. Because of the work of Jesus, many things change in the lives of followers of Christ. We grow from our mistakes. We care for others because we are not completely self-centered.

The paradoxes don’t stop there. We find strength through trials. We trust Him more when we learn we can trust Him through difficult times. And once we go through the mild pain of admitting our guilt, we are healed by the touch of the God. We gain His strength as we admit our weakness.

That is the kind of Savior and Master the world needs. Share Him with your friends. Be His spokesperson, just like Isaiah.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Go over the vocabulary words in the Word List. Be sure everyone understands. Ask if other words presented a problem for anyone.
2. Have the class memorize the Memory Verse and repeat it together. Ask: *How does this verse affect you and me?* Encourage several responses.

Encourage Application

1. Ask the group to follow in their Bibles as you read Acts 8:26-35. Tell the class: *This is one of our proofs that the Isaiah passage does indeed refer to Jesus the Christ. The writers of the New Testament were convinced of it.*
2. Cut out and give sidebar below (Rejected for Us) to a student to read. (Define *skeptic* as one who is critical or doubting.) Ask for discussion. Close with prayer that we can explain to those who do not know what Jesus has done for us.

Rejected for Us

No one likes rejection. God is no exception. He wants all people to come to Him in faith. Isaiah 53 reminds us not all people are open to the Gospel. Many rejected the Suffering Servant. He was not just ignored. He was despised and beaten for things He did not do.

Isaiah spoke truthfully, but not in great detail. The people of Jerusalem could not have understood any more than what Isaiah pictured at the time. Many people today still have no idea of the saving work of the Suffering Servant. We are called to help them understand. We can share the amazing prophecies of Isaiah. We can tell what Jesus did 2,000 years ago. We can explain what Jesus does in our hearts today. Only then will the skeptics see the goodness of One Who was “bruised for our sins.”

Teaching Guide

Unit 3 Jeremiah: Messages of Hope and Judgment Lesson 8 *Called to a Difficult Task*

Lesson Focus

When God calls us to something difficult, He helps us to do the job.

Focal/Background Text

Jeremiah 1

Memory Verse

“You must go where I send you. And you must say whatever I tell you.” Jeremiah 1:7b (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class: *Have you ever found yourself expected to do something which you did not think you were capable of doing? Can you give an example and tell how you handled the situation?* (Suggest a few examples, perhaps personal experiences, such as: (1) You are asked to be the president of an organization. You have never been an officer before, but you feel you must do the job. (2) You are asked to speak briefly on behalf of some worthy project to a large crowd. You have never before made a speech.)

Say: *Today we look at the way Jeremiah handled this problem.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask someone to read Jeremiah 1:1-3. Ask: *What personal information do we learn about Jeremiah?* (He lives in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. His father is Hilkiyah, a religious leader in the town. God spoke to him during the reign of King Josiah and his son King Jehoiakim and another son, King Zedekiah.)

3. Have a student read Jeremiah 1:4-9. Ask: *When did God decide to use Jeremiah for this task?* (Before he was born.)

What is his task? (To speak to the nations.)
What objection does he make to God? (He was too young to do the job.)

What reassurance does God offer Jeremiah? (That He will be with him. Then God touched Jeremiah’s mouth and told him that He had put His words into his mouth.)

4. Invite a student to read Jeremiah 1:10. Ask: *What four negative tasks did God give Jeremiah?* (To dig up, to pull down, to destroy, and to throw down)
What two positive tasks are given him? (To build and to plant)

5. Have someone read Isaiah 1:11-12. Ask: *What did Jeremiah see?* (A branch of an almond tree)
What does God tell him it means? (Refer to the Study Guide, paragraph 2, under the heading “How God Showed Jeremiah His Job.”)

6. Now request that someone read Jeremiah 1:13-16. Ask: *What second vision does Jeremiah see?* (A boiling pot, with its face turned away from the north)
What meaning does this vision have? (See paragraph 3 under the heading “How God Showed Jeremiah His Job” in the Study Guide.)

7. Ask a student to read Jeremiah 1:17-19. Ask: *What is Jeremiah’s task now?* (To tell the people of God’s decision.)

What assurances does God give Jeremiah for doing this difficult and unpopular, even dangerous, task? (God is with him and has made him strong enough for the task.)

What are some of the comparisons God uses here? (Jeremiah is as strong as a walled and fortified city, as a pillar of iron, and as a wall of brass.)

How will the leaders of Judah react? (They will fight against Jeremiah, but they will not have the power to defeat Jeremiah because the Lord promises He will take him out of trouble.)

Encourage Application

8. Lead the class in a discussion of “Things to Think About.”

9. Ask: *Are conditions today anything like what they were in Jeremiah’s time? If so, how?* Close with prayer that Christians today might be faithful in warning the world even as God told Jeremiah to do.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

10. Ask the class: *Have you ever needed to do something dangerous to protect your nation, your family, or your friends?* (If no one wishes to disclose this, be prepared to suggest situations which might confront a person: Going to war to defend your country, escaping a country in which you have been persecuted, facing someone who has broken into your house, rescuing someone from a fire or drowning, etc. You might collect news clippings from the paper or the Baptist Standard which tell of people who have had to face danger.)

Tell the class: *Today we look at a person who was called to warn a whole nation.*

Encourage Application

11. Examine the vocabulary words in the Word List and discuss them. Check to see if there are others which need explaining.

12. Lead the class to memorize the Memory Verse. Discuss how it can apply to each of us. Close with prayer that we may be willing to follow God’s leadership even if it means danger and social ruin.

Teaching Guide

Unit 3 Jeremiah: Messages of Hope and Judgment Lesson 9 *When Trust Is Misplaced*

Lesson Focus

The class will understand that misplaced trust leads to disaster.

Focal Text

Jeremiah 7:1-15

Background Text

Jeremiah 7:1-15; 26:1-14

Memory Verse

“The Lord of All, the God of Israel, says, ‘Change your ways and your works for the better, and I will let you live in this place.’ ”
Jeremiah 7:3 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Tell the class: *We often trust in the wrong things. Thousands of workers invested their retirement savings in Enron, the company they worked for. It was large and seemingly profitable and growing. When Enron collapsed, those people lost all that they had saved to live on when they were no longer able to work. Their trust was misplaced. In 1929 this kind of problem was so widespread that the collapse of banks and businesses led this country into what we still call the Great Depression. It lasted about 10 years for many farmers, laborers, and workers. The results of misplaced trust can have enormous consequences. Today’s scriptures tell of a people who thought God would keep on protecting them just because they had a special place of worship, regardless of how they acted.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask someone to read Jeremiah 7:1-2. Ask: *What is Jeremiah instructed to do?* (Stand in the

gate of the Temple and speak to all the people what God told him to say.) *Notice that the Study Guide places this early in King Jehoiakim’s reign, perhaps about 609 BC.*

3. Have a student read Jeremiah 7:3-4. Ask: *What must the people do?* (Change their ways and works.) *What promise is made if they listen to the message?* (They can continue to live in this land.) *Why in verse 4 are they told not to trust the lies that say, “This is the house of the Lord,” repeated two more times?* (Refer to the first 2 paragraphs under the heading in the Study Guide “Why Blind Faith Is No Good.”)

4. Choose a student to read Jeremiah 7:5-7. Say: *Here God gives some specific ways the people must behave in order to please Him. What are these?* (Judge fairly between a man and his neighbor. Do not make life hard for foreigners. Do not mistreat orphans. Do not kill those who are innocent. Do not worship other gods.) *Then Jeremiah repeats the promise God made in verse 3. He adds that if they obey God they can stay forever and ever.*
Ask someone to read the remaining paragraphs in the Study Guide under the heading “Why Blind Faith Is No Good.”

5. Ask someone to read Jeremiah 7:8-11. Say: *What seems to be the lie which Jeremiah refers to here?* (The people seem to believe that they can commit all kinds of sins without punishment.) *What types of sin are listed in verse 9?* (Stealing, killing, doing sex sins, making false promises, giving gifts to false gods.)
Point out: *The people seem to believe superstitiously that just the presence of the Temple will protect them from God’s anger. In the last verse, God points out that they may fool themselves, but they do not fool Him.*

6. Have someone read Jeremiah 7:12-14. To explain this reference have someone read the first two

paragraphs in the Study Guide under the heading “Trust What History Teaches You.” Discuss this as necessary to be sure the students understand.

7. Now ask a student to read the next paragraph in the Study Guide concerning verse 15. Discuss the consequences of not following God’s leadership.

Encourage Application

8. Lead a discussion of “Things to Think About” at the end of the Study Guide.

9. Read to the class the last paragraph in the Study Guide under the heading “Trust What History Teaches You.” Close with prayer that we would put our trust in God and what He has revealed to us in His Word rather than in material symbols of God.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class: *What items in your country or in this one do people consider “lucky,” things that will protect them or bring them good fortune?* (Some people carry tokens such as a rabbit’s foot which is supposed to bring good fortune. Some may have a lucky shirt or a charm of some kind that they use for certain occasions. In this country, luck is often personified as Lady Luck as if it were some kind of living entity. Some people use religious icons such as medals, crosses, etc., to bring protection or luck. Other countries may have other ideas. Ask the group to think of these.)

Encourage Application

1. Look at the Word List. Jeremiah’s being placed in a dry cistern comes later in the book, but the word was used in the Study Guide. In order to make the information about the Ark clear, you may want to refer to the Exodus passage. If you can duplicate an artist’s drawing of his idea of the Ark, this would make the idea clearer.

2. The background text in Jeremiah 26:1-24 shows some of the consequences of Jeremiah’s obedience to God’s command to tell the people of their sin. Read to the class verses 8 and 11.

Say: Jeremiah was prepared to die, but a few spoke against putting him to death, and the result was that he was not put to death. If you had been in Jeremiah’s place, would you have been as faithful? Close with prayer in which you quote the Memory Verse as a reminder of where our trust must lie.

Teaching Guide

Unit 3 Jeremiah: Messages of Hope and Judgment Lesson 10 *Warning to Unfaithful Leaders*

Lesson Focus

Leaders who do not encourage what is right and fair and good bring disaster.

Focal Text

Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-17; 23:9-18

Background Text

Jeremiah 22:1-23:40

Memory Verse

“The Lord says, ‘Do what is right and fair and good.’” Jeremiah 22:3 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Lead a discussion about world leaders today who are putting their own ambition ahead of the welfare of their people. Ask: *Who can you name who is not doing “what is right and fair and good?”* (Possible answers: President Mugabe of Zimbabwe whose policies are causing widespread starvation and malnutrition; Osama bin Laden who wishes to kill all who do not share his views; Leaders of the FARC rebels in Colombia who kidnap and murder to preserve their drug empires; some of the Arab nations who use the oil profits for themselves and let their people go without basic necessities, etc.) *Now consider other kinds of leaders: Do church leaders always direct the congregation in the way God would have them go? Do parents teach their children “what is right and fair and good”?*

Guide the Study

2. Ask a student to read Jeremiah 22:1-5.

Now ask the class: *Where is Jeremiah asked to go?* (To the house of the king of Judah)

To whom is he to address his message? (The king, his servants, and his people)

When God tells them to “do what is right and fair and good,” what suggestions does He make?

(Protect the one who has been robbed from the one who has robbed him; don’t hurt strangers, orphans, or widows; don’t put innocent people to death.)

God gives a promise of reward to the king who obeys him. What is it? (The kings will be strong and powerful and will continue to rule from David’s throne while the people prosper.)

What threat does God make? (If you do not obey, this house will be destroyed.)

3. Invite someone to read Jeremiah 22:13-17. Notice that Judah has been conquered by Egypt. After the death of Josiah, Judah is ruled by some of his sons for a short time. In these verses the king is Jehoiakim (609 BC to 597 BC). Refer to the Study Guide under “Why King Jehoiakim Was Wrong,” paragraph 2.

Ask: *What has Jehoiakim done wrong?* (built his house by wrong-doing, by not being fair, by failing to pay his workmen)

Jehoiakim is reminded of his father, King Josiah. In verse 15 what is said of Josiah? (He did what was right/fair/good so all went well with him.)

Verse 16 asks: “Is that not what it means to know Me?” Reread verses 16 and 17.

4. Have a student read Jeremiah 23:9-10. Explain: *In the intervening verses of chapter 22 and 23 Jeremiah prophesies about the destruction of Jerusalem and indicates the end of the ruling house. Then he quotes God as saying that there is hope in the future when He will raise up a Branch who will be wise and do what is right and fair and good. The people must go into captivity, but some will return. He uses the idea of sheep with a better Shepherd. Why does Jeremiah feel his heart is broken, his bones shake, and he behaves like a drunk man?* (It is the men who claimed to speak for God who caused the land to be full of people who are not faithful. They have led the people astray so that bad things have come, the land is filled with sorrow, and the

fields of the desert have dried up. They have used their power wrongly.)

5. Ask someone to read Jeremiah 23:11-12. The Study Guide explains verse 11. See paragraph 3 under “How the Religious Leaders Messed Up.”

Ask: *What will happen to these false religious leaders?* (They are to be driven into darkness and fall down in it.)

When will this take place? (Verse 12 refers simply to “the year of their punishment.” No definite date is given.)

6. Have a student read Jeremiah 23:13-15. Ask: *What did God see in Samaria?* (False prophets of Baal who tell the future)

What have they done to the people? (Led them into sin)

What did God see in Jerusalem? (False prophets)

What kinds of sinful things are they guilty of? (Telling lies, committing sex sins, helping those who are sinful)

How does God feel about these actions? (He says they are like Sodom and Gomorrah to Him.)

What will He do to the false prophets? (They will be punished with bitter food and poisonous water because they have caused the people to sin.)

Notice: In the Word List are definitions for Baal, prophet, Sodom, and Gomorrah.

7. Ask a student to read Jeremiah 23:16-18. Now ask someone to read the final paragraph in the Study Guide under the heading “How the Religious Leaders Messed Up.” This provides a good summary of these verses.

Encourage Application

8. Discuss “Things to Think About” in the Study Guide.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. During the Nuremberg Trials after World War II, the court refused to accept the plea that they were merely obeying orders when they massacred Jews

and other so-called “enemies of the Fatherland.” The leaders were obviously guilty of terrible crimes and led those junior officers to commit them also. Were the followers just as guilty as the leaders? Did they also deserve punishment? With this discussion in mind, look at what God planned for the people who let false leaders lead them astray.

Encourage Application

1. Examine the Word List. The following expanded definitions may help you to more fully explain this lesson’s words.

Baal: The word means “master” or “lord.” Baal was the chief god of the Canaanites. Worship of Baal was characterized by sexual immorality, sacrifice of children, riotous feasting and drinking. The places of worship used outdoor altars flanked by sacred poles made of trees displaying Astarte (a companion goddess) and stone pillars. The religion appealed to some of the Hebrews whose religion was more austere and focused on doing right.

Sodom and Gomorrah: These twin cities lay in what was a fertile valley, in what is now the south part of the Dead Sea. The citizens of these cities were so notorious for their wickedness, particularly sexual sins, that they and their cities were destroyed by God. Only Lot, Abraham’s nephew, and his two daughters were saved. Genesis 19 tells this story.

prophet: Literally, the Hebrew word means “one who speaks for another.” The Jewish prophets relayed to the people God’s words as instructed. Sometimes they told of future events; other times they rebuked and advised.

2. Work with the class on the Memory Verse. These words, unlike the Ten Commandments, are all positive, telling us what we should do. Discuss the ideas these words bring to mind: right, good, fair. End with prayer that each of us may discover from God just what He wants us to do that is right and good and fair.

Teaching Guide

Unit 3 Jeremiah: Messages of Hope and Judgment Lesson 11 *Responding Courageously*

Lesson Focus

We are called to follow the Lord with courage, even into danger, that it might go well with us.

Focal Text

Jeremiah 37:1-2, 6-17; 38:14-23

Background Text

Jeremiah 37:1—39:10

Memory Verse

“Obey the Lord by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you and you will live.”
Jeremiah 38:20 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ask someone to read aloud the opening two paragraphs in your Study Guide concerning an experience in Torreon, Mexico. Tell the class that today’s lesson involves a decision by Jeremiah to follow God’s instructions even when it meant danger to him as it had several times in the past.

Guide the Study

2. Request that a student read Jeremiah 37:1-2. Point out that Zedekiah has been placed on the throne by the Babylonians. He owed allegiance to them first. He replaced Coniah, who made a treaty with Egypt, hoping to escape from Babylonian rule. Two factions existed: those in favor of Babylon and those in favor of Egypt. Jeremiah kept giving God’s message: Surrender to Babylon to save lives and the city itself. No one listened.

3. Have someone read Jeremiah 1:6-10. Here again Jeremiah stated God’s message. Ask: *What does he predict about the Egyptians?* (They will withdraw and go home.)

What then will the Babylonians do? (They will

return and attack Jerusalem, take it, and burn it with fire.)

God assures the people that there is no way this can change. Even if only the Babylonian wounded were left to fight, it will still take place.

4. Ask a student to read Jeremiah 37:11-15. Ask: *While both armies were out of sight, what did Jeremiah try to do?* (Go to his own property in Benjamin.)

What happened? (He was stopped and accused of fleeing to the Babylonians, then beaten and thrown in prison.)

5. Have someone read Jeremiah 37:15-17. Ask: *How long has Jeremiah been in prison?* (Many days, long enough to be fearful that returning would mean his death)

King Zedekiah sends for him to be brought to the palace. There he has a secret conference with him. What is Zedekiah’s question? (Is there any word from the Lord?)

Apparently he hoped for a change in Jeremiah’s message. What does Jeremiah tell him of God’s message? (Zedekiah will be given to the king of Babylon.)

At this point Jeremiah asks not to be returned to the prison. Instead he is confined in an open courtyard and provided with a loaf of bread every day. When some of the leaders of the people complained that he was still prophesying doom for the city, Zedekiah let them punish Jeremiah in another way. They put him into a dry well that had only mud in it and left him there to die.

6. Ask someone to volunteer to read Isaiah 38:14-16. Explain: *After a friend of Jeremiah’s appealed to Zedekiah for Jeremiah’s life, the king gave permission for him to take 30 men and rescue Jeremiah.* (See Jeremiah 38:1-13.) *After his release, Zedekiah sent for him, apparently in secret.*

What question does he ask Jeremiah this time? (The same one)

Jeremiah is unwilling to tell him again, but the king makes him a promise. What is the promise? (“I will not kill you or give you over to these men who want to kill you.”)

7. Knowing that Zedekiah will not do as Jeremiah tells him, the prophet still gives him an answer. Read Jeremiah 38:17-18.

What is the message? (If you surrender to the Babylonians, you will live and the city will not be burned.)

In verse 18 Jeremiah tells Zedekiah what will happen if he does not obey God. What does he say? (He rephrases the prophecy: “If you will not go out . . . then the city will be given to the Babylonians” and burned with fire, “and you will not get away from them.”)

8. Ask a student to read Jeremiah 38:19-23. Here we have the protests of a weak king who is afraid of his own advisers as well as of the Babylonians. *What is he afraid will happen to him? (When he surrenders, he fears that the Jews who have already surrendered will make life hard for him. He is not a brave man.)*

Jeremiah tries to reassure him in verse 20. What does he say? (Obey and it will go well with you and you will live.)

What will happen if he refuses to obey? Here Jeremiah gives more details. (The women will be taken before the Babylonians where they will sing a lament mocking Zedekiah’s weakness before being turned over to the invaders, where they will suffer greatly. His wives and sons will be turned over to the enemy. He himself will be taken, and the city will be burned.)

Discuss these verses in light of the Study Guide section “A Weak King Warned Again.” Read parts of this aloud if you feel it will help the students understand this passage better.

Encourage Application

9. A few days before the class, ask a student to be prepared to summarize Jeremiah 39:1-10. If none of your students can handle the English that well, plan to do this yourself.

During class, ask: *Are you curious about how all this turns out?* Present the summary.

Ask the class to discuss what bad rulers can do to

ruin a country and destroy the people. Close with prayer that we may follow only leaders who lead us the way God would have us go.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Tell the class: *This country is justifiably proud of the brave men and women who went to rescue other people after the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center towers in New York City. Many of those people were off-duty but gave their lives to try to help. Some were retired people. Some were workers in the buildings but they returned to the towers to try to help others. All over the country, people responded with help and with donations. Many groups came to New York City to work in dangerous conditions. Such courage is not common, but it is something we can all admire. In today’s lesson, we see examples of both courage and the lack of it. Jeremiah suffered when he did what God told him to do. Zedekiah led himself and a whole nation into disaster because he was too cowardly to follow God’s orders.*

Encourage Application

1. Work with the class to learn the Memory Verse. Recite it together.

2. Discuss the “Things to Think About” section at the end of the Study Guide. Close with prayer that God would help us to become courageous to do what He tells us to do, regardless of the cost.

Teaching Guide

Unit 4 Jeremiah: God's Message of Hope Lesson 12 *When the Worst Is Happening*

Lesson Focus

God provides hope even when we feel the worst is happening.

Focal Text

Jeremiah 32:1-15

Background Text

Jeremiah 32

Memory Verse

“Then I knew that this was the Word of the Lord.” Jeremiah 32:8 (New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class: *Have you ever heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls?*

Relate the story of their finding in 1947 during the Palestinian War. Two half-Bedouin young men were searching for lost goats northwest of the Dead Sea among the caves in the cliffs. They were tossing stones up into a cave when they heard the sound of pottery breaking. They climbed up to investigate. They found a large number of clay jars, each of which had been sealed to hold scrolls. The sealed pottery had protected the scrolls for more than 2,000 years in this dry climate. When examined, they proved to be writings of the period 200-500 B.C. These valuable scrolls contained the oldest manuscript of Isaiah ever found. There were also pieces of other Old Testament books—Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges, and more. If they had not been preserved in this way, they would have fallen to pieces long ago. Today we see how Jeremiah's preserving of legal papers could have lasted far into the future.

Guide the Study

2. Ask someone to read Jeremiah 32:1-5. Point

out to the class that these verses may sound repetitious, but Jeremiah had to keep repeating his message. Neither the king nor the people would believe him. This passage is in the 18th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Your Study Guide places it about 587 BC.

Ask: How has Jeremiah been punished so far? (He was in a muddy well for awhile; now he is shut up in an open space in the prison of the king's palace.)

Where is the Babylonian army now? (Camped around Jerusalem)

Why has King Zedekiah shut him up? (He does not like the prophecies of Jeremiah and apparently keeps hoping he will change them to something more favorable.)

What are the two things Jeremiah insists will happen? (Jerusalem will fall, and Zedekiah will be taken prisoner to Babylon if he insists on fighting Babylon.)

3. God speaks to Jeremiah again in Jeremiah 32:6-8. Have someone read these verses.

What did God tell Jeremiah? (His cousin Hanamel is coming to ask Jeremiah to buy his field at Anathoth.)

What makes Jeremiah sure the Lord has spoken to him? (The cousin does come and ask him to buy the field.)

Now ask someone to read the Study Guide section, “God Says and Does,” to explain their strange customs.

4. Request that a student read Jeremiah 32:9-14. Again refer to the Study Guide and ask the students to read the section, “A Public Deal to Buy a Field.”

5. Invite a student to read Jeremiah 32:15. Point out that if this transaction seems strangely out of place in the middle of a siege of the city, God does have a purpose in it. In the first chapter of Jeremiah, we read that Jeremiah had two jobs. First, he was to “pull down and destroy;” then he was to “build and

to plant” (Jeremiah 1:10). Now ask someone to read the last two paragraphs of the Study Guide section, “Why They Made the Deal.”

Encourage Application

6. Discuss the “Things to Think About” questions. Close with a two-fold prayer: That we may always know when God is speaking to us, and that we remember that He provides hope for the future.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class: *Have you experienced times in which you felt the worst was happening?* Suggest some possibilities if they are hesitant to answer:

- (1) A child is murdered or kidnapped.
- (2) A person is accused and imprisoned unjustly.
- (3) A marriage collapses in bitterness and hatred.
- (4) A group of teenagers is killed when a drunken driver smashes into their car.

Our lesson today describes Jeremiah and his country in such a situation, but it does not end in despair. There is hope.

Encourage Application

1. Read to the class a part of the last paragraph under “A Prophet in Prison and a King with No Hope” which deals with the meaning of “to visit.” Then ask that the class discuss the question which is posed there: *When the Lord visits you, which of these things (inspect, supervise, take care of, or punish) does He do in your life?*

2. Ask the class to learn and say together the Memory Verse. Then close with prayer that God will guide you in knowing what He wants you to do.

Teaching Guide

Unit 4 Jeremiah: God's Message of Hope Lesson 13 *It's a New Day*

Lesson Focus

God gives us new opportunities and fresh starts.

Focal/Background Text

Jeremiah 31:27-34

Memory Verse

“All of them will already know Me from the least to the greatest, says the Lord. I will forgive their sins. I will remember their sins no more.” Jeremiah 31:34(New Life Version)

Connect with Life

1. Ask the class: *Have you ever gotten past a really troublesome time and felt relief and that you could make a new start? Perhaps you agonized over grades or whether a qualifying test result would be good enough. Perhaps you have dreaded to begin a new job only to find that things worked out beautifully. Some of you must have made a major move. What a relief when it was over and you could begin in a new place. You may look back at your wedding day as a time when it felt as if you were beginning a brand new life with a bright future. Can you think of others that made you rejoice in a new beginning? Jeremiah tells the people of Judah and of Israel that there will be a new beginning.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask a student to read Jeremiah 31:27-28.
Ask: *When will the new beginning take place?* (At a future time. The end of the Babylonian captivity came 70 years later when God began to bring the people back to rebuild Jerusalem.)
In addition to the people, what else will God restore? (Animals—these people needed new herds of cattle and sheep to sustain themselves.)
God has already “watched over” the people

“to pull up, to break down, to take power away, to destroy, and to bring trouble,” now what does He promise in the last part of verse 28? (He will now “watch over them to build and to plant.”)

Notice that these are the things God has told Jeremiah to do, now He assures them that He too will be working.

3. Request a student to read Jeremiah 31:29-30. Now have some students read the paragraphs under the heading in the Study Guide, “Every Tub Sits on Its Own Bottom.” Make sure that the class understands the saying in the heading and the sour grapes reference. In the future, each person will be responsible for his own sin. That does not mean that what one person does will not cause his friends and family and other people to suffer.

4. Invite someone to read Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Ask: *When will these things take place?* (In an indefinite future. The complete fulfillment of this promise did not come until Jesus came to die for sins of the people, to rise from the dead, and to ascend to the Father.)

What groups are named to receive the New Way of Worship? (Jews and Judah. Some of the people from the northern tribes as well as many of the descendants of the present inhabitants of Jerusalem will eventually be admitted to the New Way of Worship.)

Ask someone to read the first six paragraphs under the heading, “A New Way to Know God.”

When was the Old Way of Worship established? (After God led the people from Egypt and gave them the Ten Commandments.)

In verse 33, how does the New Way differ from the Old Way? (The New Way will be written on their hearts instead of on tablets of stone. There will be a closer relationship between God and His people.)

5. Now have someone read the last two paragraphs under “A New Way to Know God.”

Encourage Application

6. Discuss with the class the questions in the “Things to Think About” section.

7. Work with the group to learn the Memory Verse and to repeat it together. Close with prayer thanking God for being willing to forgive our sins and remembering them no more.

Supplemental Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

1. Ask a student to read the introductory paragraphs of the lesson. Tell the class that today we are studying the New Way of Worship that God provides for His people.

Encourage Application

1. Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to the New Testament, Hebrews 8:6-13. Read all or selected parts of the passage. Point out that this is how the two Ways of Worship were explained hundreds of years later in the New Testament. Now look at Galatians 3:23-29. Emphasize that all believers in Jesus Christ as Savior are God's children and as such, are children of promise. At last we have arrived at the New Way of Worship in its fulfillment.

Close with prayer thanking God for making it possible for us to share in the promises made to Abraham, and praying for the many that do not yet know this blessing.