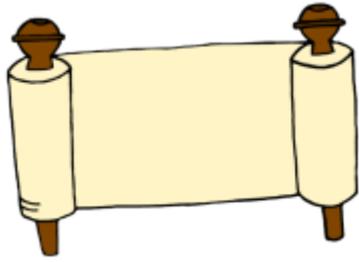


# Jeremiah and the Scroll



**Scripture Reference:** [Jeremiah 36](#)

**Suggested Theme:** God loves when we repent and follow His ways again.

**Memory Verse:** “If you hide your sins, you will not succeed. If you confess and reject them, you will receive mercy.” [Proverbs 28:13, ICB](#)

## Story Overview:

Jeremiah continued to warn the people of Judah that their nation would be destroyed if they did not repent (say they were sorry and change their ways) and follow God. The Lord commanded Jeremiah to write these warnings on a scroll and read them to the people. Jeremiah dictated the words to his secretary, Baruch, and then told him to go to the temple and read it to the people. Eventually, the scroll was read to King Jehoiakim. He did not want to repent, so he cut the scroll into pieces and threw the pieces into a fire. He wanted Baruch and Jeremiah arrested, but the Lord kept them safely hidden. Jeremiah and Baruch wrote the scroll again and began preaching that the nation of Judah would be destroyed because the king and the people did not repent.

## Background Study:

The year was 605/4 BC. Jehoiakim was still the ruler of Judah. The King of Egypt had appointed him, and he did not obey God. Although he ruled for eleven years, he was a puppet king to Egypt. He did what the king of Egypt wanted him to do.

The end of the Kingdom of Judah was imminent. Already, the king of Babylon was attacking and carrying off captives. Daniel (next week’s story) was one of the early captives taken off to Babylon. That probably happened not long before this week’s story. Almost twenty years later, Jerusalem finally completely fell to the Babylonians. [Background Information on the Divided Kingdom.](#)

The Kingdom of Judah was in terrible shape. King Jehoiakim did not respect or worship God. He resented the prophet Jeremiah, who was always telling him he was wrong. Jeremiah continued to declare the word of the Lord but avoided the king and his officials for his own safety.

When this message from the Lord came to Jeremiah, Jeremiah knew he would have to be careful in presenting it to the people. He could not preach it openly, or he would be arrested. The wisdom of the Lord is shown in commanding that His word be recorded on a scroll. The scroll could be read and copied even when Jeremiah himself could not be present. Considering the future fall of Jerusalem and the migration of the Jews, the written word was a sure way to keep the message alive.

Before the invention of books, the Old Testament and New Testament writings were copied on scrolls, sheets of papyrus or leather glued end to end and rolled up on rods. The Old Testament writings were probably originally written on and copied on leather scrolls. The New Testament writings were written and copied on papyrus scrolls. Papyrus scrolls, manufactured in Egypt since 3000 BC, were made from the papyrus reed, which grew readily along the Nile. Two layers of these strips, one in horizontal and one in vertical rows, were laid atop one another and bonded together to form thick, rough sheets of paper.

The language used in the scroll would have been Hebrew. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters. The text was written from right to left. Originally, all of the letters were consonants, so it is almost impossible to determine the original pronunciation of Hebrew words.

Some Hebrew words have come to be used in the modern English language. Two examples are “myrrh” and “jubilee.”

### **Way to Introduce the Story:**

Make a scroll by rolling up a long piece of paper. Write the scripture reference “Jeremiah 36:2” on the scroll. Let the children look up the Scripture and read it out loud. Talk about what a scroll is and how people in Old Testament times did not have books. Books, as we know them, were not yet invented.

Another fun thing you could do is to encourage older children to research about Hebrew letters. They could use bible concordances or research online. Then, write the Hebrew letters on the scroll and let the children guess what they are. A simple word to write would be “Shalom”, which is the Hebrew word for peace.

### **The Story:**

God promised His people that He would always take care of them. All the people had to do was follow and worship God and try their best to obey Him. If they did this, God promised never to let the enemies win over them and hurt them. God’s people used to be divided into two kingdoms. They had two names – Israel and Judah. The kingdom of Israel did not obey God. They worshipped idols and treated each other badly. Enemies came and destroyed the kingdom of Israel.

The other kingdom, Judah, had many kings over the years. Some were good kings who worshipped God; others were not good and worshipped idols. When the people of Israel again forgot God and served idols, God sent the prophet Jeremiah to them. God told Jeremiah, “Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you.”

So Jeremiah asked his helper, Baruch, to help him. Jeremiah would say the words from God, and Baruch would write them down on a scroll. Soon, the scroll was filled with messages from God. The message the Lord gave Jeremiah was that if the people did not stop worshipping idols, the big city of Jerusalem would be broken down, and the beautiful temples and houses would be burned.

The king and many other people were already angry with Jeremiah. They did not like it when Jeremiah told them they needed to repent of their sins. To repent meant that they would have to say they were sorry for what they had done wrong. They had to say they were wrong in following idols and not God. But that was not all! Repenting is not just saying you are sorry for the bad thing you have done. Repenting means you have to stop doing bad things and then try to do good things. They needed to follow God and do what God wanted them to do.

Since so many people were angry with Jeremiah, he knew that they might not listen to him. So Jeremiah asked Baruch to take the scroll to the temple, where crowds gathered. Baruch was to read the scroll’s words to all the people.

When all the people were gathered at the temple, Baruch read the message of the Lord to them. While the people were listening, some of King Jehoiakim's officials also heard the message. They knew that King Jehoiakim would not like the message. King Jehoiakim liked to worship idols and to disobey God. He would not want to say he was sorry for his bad actions. He would not want to change and do good things. The officials knew that the King would not want to hear a message from God about repenting.

Some of King Jehoiakim's officials invited Baruch to come and read the message on the scroll to them. After they heard the message, they asked Baruch where he got it. "I got it from the prophet of Jeremiah, of course."

The king's officials knew that they had to take the scroll to the king, and they knew that the king would be angry. Before taking the scroll, they told Baruch to get Jeremiah so both could go and hide.

Then, the officials took the scroll away from Baruch and told the king about it. The king sent someone to go and get the scroll and read it out loud. The king grew very angry when he heard God's message. He did not like it when the message said that he should repent.

Then, the king noticed the fire. Because it was winter, a big fire was burning to keep everyone warm. Now, whenever a few lines of the message were read, the king would use a scribe's knife and cut off that part of the scroll. Then, when a little more was read, he would cut that part off and throw it in the fire. Soon, the whole scroll was burned up! The king did not respect the word of the Lord!

The king sent men to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but no one could find them. They were safely hidden. Soon, another message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. Again, Jeremiah said the words out loud, and Baruch wrote them down. This time on a brand new scroll. The new scroll contained all of the words that the old one did, and it also had a special message for King Jehoiakim. Bad things would happen to the king because he did not obey the words of the Lord and repent of his sins.

### **Ways to Tell the Story:**

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

### **Review and Reflection Questions:**

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

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### **Review:**

- Which prophet said the message of God out loud while his helper wrote it in a scroll? (Jeremiah)

- What did Jeremiah ask his helper to do after he had written down Jeremiah's words on the scroll? (Read it out loud for all the people to hear at the Temple)
- What was Jeremiah's servant's name? (Baruch)
- Why did God want Jeremiah to send His message to the people of Judah? (God said if they heard the message and repented, He would forgive them)
- What does repent mean? (To say sorry for what you have done wrong and then stop doing it)
- What did King Jehoiakim do with the scroll when his servant read from it? (He tore off pieces and threw them in the fire)
- After the King burned the scroll, what did Jeremiah do? (He wrote another one)
- What did this story teach you about God?

### **Reflection:**

- What do you think a scroll looks, feels, or smells like?
- How big of a scroll do you think it was?
- Where do you think Jeremiah and Baruch hid?
- How do you think Baruch felt when Jeremiah asked him to write down God's message on the scroll?
- If you were Baruch, would you have been afraid to read the scroll in front of the people?
- Why do you think the King's officials told Baruch and Jeremiah to hide so they wouldn't be captured by the King?
- How did God show love to the people in this story?
- Why is it hard to repent?
- Repenting is not just saying we are sorry for our sins and asking God to forgive us, but it also means we will stop sinning in that way. Which part of repentance is most difficult for you?

### **Prayer:**

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

### **Song Suggestions:**

- [Cast Your Burdens](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more song options.

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### **Activities and Crafts:**

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

## Activities:

- Practice writing Hebrew letters.
- Older children can research the word “repent.” They could use a dictionary, bible concordance, encyclopaedia or other online resources.
- Younger children can act out situations where they need to repent. They will most understand the concept of saying they are sorry. Use tape to “draw” two large faces on the floor. One can be a happy face and one a sad face. Describe a situation to the children (pushing younger brother, for example). Now give them two different endings – one where the child says they are sorry but then pushes the brother again and another where they say they are sorry and then stop pushing and try to help the brother. Each time you tell an ending, the children should stand on the appropriate face on the floor. Happy face if the child repents and sad face if the child does not. Use a number of descriptive situations. This game will bring home the idea that saying “sorry” is not enough.
- Show younger (and maybe some older) children the proper way to take care of a bible: Turn pages correctly. Do not “crack” the spine. Do not turn down pages. So, do not stick lots of paper between the pages. Write neat notes in the margins, but do not colour in them. Keep it in a safe place.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

## Crafts:



- Draw an outline of a “U” on a paper. This should look like a “U-turn” road sign. Have the children write the words of Acts 3:19 inside the “U.” *“So you must change your hearts and lives! Come back to God, and he will forgive your sins.”*
- [Make a scroll. Click here for instructions.](#) Write out [Jeremiah 36:2](#) on the scroll.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

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## Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [How to draw a simple scroll \(wikiHow\)](#)
- [Printable Chart: Chronology of the Prophets after the Fall of Samaria \(Israel\) in 722 B.C. - Part 1 \(Bible charts\)](#)
- [Printable Chart: Chronology of the Prophets after Fall of Samaria \(Israel\) in 722 B.C.-Part 2 \(Bible charts\)](#)

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## Date

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