

STORY 3: ANTICIPATION

Because of their betrayal, Adam and Eve were removed from the garden and their fellowship with God was broken. However, God did not abandon mankind. Instead, God gave a promise of restoration and life.

Some time later, God's people continued to rebel against him just like Adam and Eve had done. The seed of disobedience was in every person and no one was able to know God like Adam and Eve did. From time to time, God would speak to the people through spokesmen.

One day, God approached a man named Jeremiah, and told him that he would be God's spokesmen to the people. Jeremiah said, "But wait! I don't know anything--I am only a boy." God replied, "Do not be afraid. I am with you and I will take care of you."

So Jeremiah spoke God's words to the people. He told the people of God's anger at their disobedience and how God would surely punish them for worshipping other gods and forgetting about the one true God.

As a result of Jeremiah's words, the people around him began to resent him. His family turned on him. His closest friends turned on him. "Everyone mocks me," he told God. But God comforted him by being close to him and giving him strength.

One day, Jeremiah was speaking God's word to the people. The people did not want to hear of God's punishment, so they grabbed him and said, "You must die." Jeremiah was reported to the rulers of the land and they declared, "This man is condemned to die."

With no one there to defend him, Jeremiah defended himself. He said, "God sent me to tell you these things. Now, change your ways and what you are doing, and listen to the Lord your God." And then he said, "My life is in your hands. Do whatever you think is right, but if you kill me, my innocent blood will be on your heads."

At last, some of the leaders stood up and spoke on his behalf, and would not allow the people to kill him. Instead, they put him in prison.

While Jeremiah was being held captive for speaking God's words to the people, God gave him a new message. He told the people of a new promise. God promised that he would restore their relationships with Him. He promised that He would allow them to know Him, and that he would forgive their wickedness. And he promised that one day, a Savior would come who would save the people from their disobedience and restore them to what they once were.

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- **review:** re-tell the story
- **dialogue:** discuss the story
 - What do you like or not like about the story?
 - Who are the main characters in the story? What do we know about them?
 - Why did the people react to Jeremiah the way they did?
 - What can we learn about God from the story?
- **application:** live the story
 - Based on this story and the previous ones, what do you believe God's restoration would look like?
 - Jeremiah's new message from God was one of hope and promise. In what have you experienced hope and promise in today's world? What difference does hope make in our lives?
- **notes:**