

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: Jeremiah 2:1-13; 16:10-13; 31:31-34

Gospel Focus: 2 Peter 3:8-10

Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand the role the prophets played in the history of God's people.
- Students will see how God demonstrates His great love in His patience with humankind.
- Students will embrace their role in sharing the news of the Gospel with those who most need it.



Overview

As you attempt to tell the big-picture story of Scripture in a year, you'll inevitably have to leave out some details and condense others. This is one of those moments where we're going to fast-forward over an important aspect of Israel's history: namely, the role of the prophets. There's simply no way to cover the entire amazing ministry the prophets undertook. But you're going to get the chance to teach your students all about Jeremiah, and how his message to the Israelites was representative of the ministry of the prophets in general. Your students will also understand how they are called to be kind of like the prophets in their own way, telling the world about the good news of the Gospel.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 22 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 22, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

Jeremiah

Author: Though there has been some disagreement over the years, there is no compelling reason to doubt that the Prophet Jeremiah is the author is indeed the author of the book that shares his name. He was accompanied by his scribe, Baruch.

Time frame: Best estimates have the book completed sometime around 550 BC.

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

Purpose: Jeremiah and Baruch wrote the book to capture the turmoil that faced them and to cast a vision for the hopeful future God had in store for Israel.

2 Peter

Author: 2 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.

Time frame: 2 Peter was likely written between 64-67 AD, shortly before Peter was martyred.

Purpose: 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero, similar to 1 Peter. 2 Peter deals with some of the same themes, though focuses a great deal on grace in the face of persecution.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** Students will be introduced to the role the prophets played in the history of God's people.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need something for students to write on and with. You'll need to be prepared to divide students up into small groups. And you may want to bring a prize of some sort for the team that wins.

FIRST, distribute to your group whatever you have provided for students to write with. Then, split your group into smaller groups, into pairs, or into individuals--whichever works best! Explain that you are about to play a little Bible trivia game. If you have a prize, like candy or a Starbucks card, show it to your group.

THEN, say something like:

- **Who has ever heard of the prophets in the Bible? This week, as we continue our big-picture look at the story of the Bible, we're going to talk about the prophets of Israel. However, there are a ton of prophets ministering in the Bible, way too many to discuss in this lesson. (Scholars point out that there were over 50 different prophets mentioned in the Old Testament.) In fact, there are 17 Old Testament books in the Bible that are considered "prophetic" books. Without looking at your Bible or your Bible apps, work together to identify all 17 books. The first one to all 17 wins!**

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

If your students are having difficulties remembering, after a few moments, allow them to open their Bibles. The interaction is the most important part, so don't worry if they don't know them all from memory.

NEXT, award the winning team with their prize, and affirm all of the students for working together to accomplish the task. Then, talk a little bit about what a prophet is. Ask:

- **What do you remember about the Old Testament prophets? What was their purpose?**
 - Answer: They were God's chosen messengers, sharing God's words with the people.
- **Can you remember any specific stories involving prophets?**
 - Don't worry if students can't, though you may want to mention a few yourself.
- **Just off the top of your head, if someone said they were speaking a message from God, how would you respond, and why would you respond that way?**
 - Again, you're not really looking for specific answers here. Just wanting to get students thinking about prophets and their message.

FINALLY, transition to the Bible study portion of the lesson by saying something similar to the following:

- **Today, we're going to look at the words God spoke through Jeremiah as a sort of representative example of the ministry of prophets in general. What we're going to see is a pattern in how God spoke through His prophets. We'll see how God spoke a message of hope through His prophets, and how that hope was fully realized in Jesus.**

Transition to The Story.

The Story

- **Goal:** To understand the role the prophets played in the history of God's people.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

FIRST if you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Remind students where they are in the story of the Bible. David had come and gone as King of Israel.**
- **Solomon, David's son, was a good king for most of his rule. But he turned away from God, leading Israel to do the same.**
- **God's people experienced a major division once Solomon died. Israel split in two, with a northern kingdom called Israel, and a southern kingdom called Judah.**
- **The prophets were sent by God to warn the people to stop their divisive ways and to turn back to God.**

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

THEN, explain to your students that you are going to look at three different parts of Jeremiah's message. Have students turn to Jeremiah 2. While they are finding it in their Bibles or Bible apps, provide some of the context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read Jeremiah 2:1-13. When he or she has finished, lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **Look at verses 1-3. Describe what's happening here. What is the tone of these verses?**
 - o Answer: God is remembering the time when Israel was faithful. He was recalling how His hand was on them because they were faithful. It is a peaceful, loving, reminiscent tone.
- **Verse 4 provides a sort of break. Describe what happens in verses 5-8. How is the tone different?**
 - o Answer: God wants to know why the people turned away. In a sense, He's accusing them of worshipping other gods and forgetting His faithfulness to them. The tone is maybe anger, or frustration, even a little hurt or disappointment.
- **Focus on verses 9-13. Yikes! What does this sound like to you? In other words, if you were the Israelites, what would you consider this message?**
 - o Answer: It is a warning! When God says that He will "contend" with Israel, it means that His judgment is coming.

Explain to students that verse 5 kind of sums up the Lord's issue with Israel. Israel had turned their back on God. And God sent the prophets to warn the Israelites. Say something like:

- **For hundreds of years, yes hundreds, the prophets gave this kind of message to the Israelites. They operated in both the northern and southern kingdoms sharing God's message of disappointment and frustration. God made it clear that He saw Israel's betrayal and was angered and hurt by it. This kind of message repeated itself over and over again, but it wasn't the only message.**

NEXT, have students turn to Jeremiah 16:10-13. Explain that this is the second type of message the prophets would give. Read or have a student read, and then engage in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Describe what's happening in verse 10? What are the people saying?**
 - o Answer: This is a picture of the people protesting when God does indeed allow His judgment to come upon them. They are basically going, "What did we do to deserve this?"
- **Considering what we just discussed, why is this kind of funny that the people would respond this way?**
 - o Answer: They knew they had turned from God. The prophets spent hundreds of years telling the people this type of warning. And yet they didn't listen.
- **In verses 11-12, God gives the reason why His judgment is finally coming. What is the ultimate prediction that occurs in verse 13?**
 - o Answer: God would eventually allow Israel and Judah to be overrun by other countries. In fact, you'll read about this in your next lesson.

Again, explain that numerous prophets, in both the northern and southern kingdoms, gave this kind of message for hundreds of years. God was extremely CLEAR and extremely PATIENT with His people. Say:

- **He told them what was coming, and then God gave them hundreds of years to change their ways. They didn't. And they experienced the judgment God told them would come. But God being God, He couldn't leave it at that. Let's look at one last kind of message the prophets gave the people.**

THEN, read or have a student read Jeremiah 31:31-34. Ask:

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

- **Whoah! What is happening here? Someone summarize what kind of message this is?**
 - o Answer: It's a message of hope! It's a promise that God would continue to love and care for His people.
- **What makes this message so unique?**
 - o Answer: It came in the midst of God's warning and pronouncement of judgment.
- **When most people give you a warning, and then punish you, do they take the time to promise you all the good things they will continue to do for you?**
 - o Answer: Um, no.
- **What does this say about God and His character?**
 - o Answer: God is eternally, perfectly faithful. God was showing that He would keep the covenant He made with His people that started with Abraham. He would remain faithful and loving even though His people had not.

Say something like:

- **Over and over again, God warned His people of coming judgment for their unfaithfulness. And God kept His word. He did allow His people to be judged in the form of invading armies. But over and over again, God spoke through His prophets to predict the hope that was coming. He promised to be faithful to His own nature: evil must be punished, but God will always work for restoration and redemption. Let's take a quick look at how we see this message playing out in the form of the Gospel.**

The Thread

FIRST, read or have a student read 2 Peter 3:8-10. When you've finished, ask students if they can point out the parallel between the patience God showed Israel/Judah and the patience He shows the world today. Ask:

- **What is the parallel? How do you see God working with us today in a similar way in which He worked with Israel?**
 - o Answer: The key is, of course, understanding God's patience. God spent hundreds of years giving His people warnings through the prophets. He wanted them to turn back to Him! God is doing the same thing today. He is patiently awaiting returning so that more people can come to saving faith in Him.
- **Today we see the world falling apart around us. We may ask, Where is God? Why is He waiting? Why hasn't He returned? Peter gives the reason here. What it is?**
 - o Answer: Because He is patient! He is loving. He wants as many as will come to Him to come.
- **We saw both judgment and hope in Jeremiah's words. Where do you see both judgment and hope in Peter's words?**
 - o Answer: There will be redemption and salvation. God is waiting so more people have the chance to come to saving faith in Him. There is hope in this, and love, and grace. But there is also a judgment coming, a final one. And like the Israelites, God will allow those who turned from Him to be judged. And this time it will be final.

FINALLY, explain that we should be motivated by God's great love and patience. We should be compelled to go out

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

and share the Gospel with others in hopes that they come to faith in Him.

If there are no questions or comments, transition into the Wrapping Up section to talk about how your students apply these truths in their lives.

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To challenge students to embrace their role in sharing the news of the Gospel with those who most need it.
- **Set-Up:** You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some of your students' responses.

FIRST, remind students that God has an enormous heart for the world and wants all people, everywhere to be invited into His family. Explain that part of God being patient and waiting on people to come to faith in Him is so that we can have the opportunity to tell the world about Him. Say something like:

- **All of us are called to share the Gospel with the world. You are called to make an immediate impact in your schools and communities. So let's take seriously this invitation to partner with God to bring the love and grace of Jesus to your specific context.**

NEXT, ask your students to picture the people they interact with on a daily basis. Some of these are good friends. Some are acquaintances. But all of them are impacted by your students' day-to-day interactions with them. These are the people that they have the most influence on, and might actually be the very people who need to be invited into God's family.

Ask, as they picture these people, if any of them don't yet know Jesus. Explain that these people might not be in their circle of friends, but God has given them a heart for them, and an opportunity to reach them for Christ.

THEN, tell them that the task of sharing the Gospel is something that they do not do alone. It is something that they partner with the Holy Spirit in. Explain that part of how we connect to that power, wisdom, and discernment is through prayer.

Tell students that the way you are going to conclude your time together is in praying to God. Say something like:

- **Sharing the Gospel in our words in our actions isn't always easy. And so, I want to pray for us very specifically here. I want to ask God for wisdom and discernment in how to go about sharing the Gospel with your friends; for opportunities to have spiritual conversations with them; and for your own walks with Jesus, that you would continue to become more and more like Jesus, more and more like disciples, so that you too would be able to make disciples of others.**

Depending on your group and group dynamics, students should spend the remainder of their time in prayer for their friends and for the things on this list. This can be one alone, in pairs, in small groups. You know your group and you know the best way to proceed.

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall.
Lesson 22: The Prophets

FINALLY, after everyone is done with prayer, close your time by challenging them to be bold in sharing their faith. God is coming back one day. And there are people who will be separated from Him unless they come to faith in Him. Challenge them to play their part in leading people to Christ.

- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 22 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.