

Unit XX

Jeremiah's Story

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” Jeremiah 1:5

The book of Jeremiah shares the calling of Jeremiah, his prophecies and struggles. His life as a prophet was not a joy ride and might be renamed as the diary of a weepy kid. It’s the longest book of the Bible with more than 33,000 words. So, what's Jeremiah all about?

He started his work as a prophet as a teenager, but his story began long before that, even long before he started growing inside his mom. For God, life begins in His thoughts about each person. His story began when God chose for Jeremiah to be born and to become a prophet. The book shares Jeremiah's heart and tears for the Israelites who refused to listen and repent that led to their captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem by enemies. It also shares the history of the nation during his time. He goes beyond that to offer hope of a future with God who promised to eventually restore the people and give them new hearts.

Jeremiah did not give up. He kept speaking out for God even when any king said he would put him to death. He had a tough life of being ignored, abused, and even being thrown into a cistern, a very deep well with a muddy bottom, to starve. Read about the cistern in Jeremiah 38. That's persistence! God's mercy and patience with people seen in the book gives us hope too.

Archeology Evidence Confirming the book of Jeremiah

Archeologists discovered a tablet with a financial record, kept in a British museum. The text of Nebo-Sarsekim confirms Jeremiah 39:12. Hooray! When one name or event in a book of the Bible is proven true it helps people realize all the words in that book are true. That's huge since

this is evidence from so many centuries ago, 650-570 B.C. That's 2600 years ago. Such discoveries can cause people who want to make people think the Bible is untrue pause and wonder, or hopefully even believe.

In addition to that find, dime-sized bullae (clay seals) confirm other people in the book of Jeremiah. Finding these names is very important. People pressed a bulla on wax to seal a letter closed. The raised inscriptions left the mark from the seal to verify the person sent it. The bulla were often on a ring the official wore.

- Jaazaniah, servant of the king, mentioned in Jeremiah 51:59, was the father of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe.
- Seraiah son of Neriah, also mentioned in Jeremiah 51:59, was given an order by Jeremiah.
- Gamriah, official during King Jehoaikim's reign, mentioned in Jeremiah 36:10
- Shelemiah, father of Jehucal, mentioned in Jeremiah 37:3 and 38:1. are both named in a bulla found in the City of David. official during King Zedekiah's reign
- Gedaliah, and his father Pashhur, are both mentioned in Jeremiah 38:1, found on one bulla.

Digging Deeper

1. God thought about you before you were born too. Describe what God might have thought.

2. How do you feel when someone does not believe you, especially when you talk about your faith?

3. What message in the Bible do you want to share with people?

Be God's Faith Champion!

Don't give up/ Jeremiah never gave up. Keep telling people the truth about God the Father, His Son Jesus God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Think of what will help you to speak about Jesus even when others make fun or you or don't listen?

Activity

Jeremiah Bullae

[Illustration note: if possible use photos of the bulla. Links:
<https://dornsife.usc.edu/wsrp/roman-period-bullae-seal-impressions/>
<http://helpmewithbiblestudy.org/17Archeology/bullaeJeremiah.aspx>]

These bullae would be used to confirm official documents. Document would be folded and tied with string. Then a lump of clay would be pressed into the string and the bulla pressed onto the clay. The clay would have the mirror impression (backwards) from the original bulla.

What you need

Soft art foam

Air drying clay

A sharp awl or needle

A picture of the bulla (or your own design) that is a mirror image (backwards)

What to do

Use a 2-inch piece of foam. Engrave with the awl or needle to create the design

Press the design into the clay. Press hard.

Lift up the foam and look at the impression made. Let it dry overnight.

The clay will have the design in the correct order of the Hebrew letters/symbols

This is a design similar to the bulla for the Jerahmeel seal inscribed Jehucal son of Shelemiah.

The name is found in Jeremiah 37:3 and 38:1

