

## Lesson 13—May 24, 2020

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 72:1-17  
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 22  
PRINT PASSAGE: Jeremiah 22:1-10

**Key Verse**—Do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. (Jeremiah 22:3b, KJV)

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“Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.” (Jeremiah 22:3b, NIV)

# Do the Right Thing



### Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Commentary: Teacher's Edition
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults
- (Optional: Adults/Young Adults Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

### Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, the participants should be able to do these things:

- Understand that the covenant relationship between God and God's people requires justice.
- Repent for injustice and seek to deliver the oppressed.
- Become active agents of deliverance for the oppressed.



### \*Key Terms

**Forsaken (verse 9)**—Hebrew: *'azab* (ä·zav'): had left, refused, departed from, left behind.

**Gilead (verse 6)**—Hebrew: *Gilad* (ghil-awd'): a region east of the Jordan (in Palestine); also, the name of several Israelites.

**Judah (verse 1)**—Hebrew: *Yehudah* (yeh-hoo-daw'): a son of Jacob's; also, his descendants; the southern kingdom.

**Orphan (verse 3)**—Hebrew: *yathom* (yaw-thome'): someone who is without parents (or is "fatherless" [KJV/NIV]).

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)

### Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.

- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and Your World!").
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week's lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.
- See page 113 for the *Faith in 3-D* as it explains how to live out their faith in the world.

## WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Society often ignores and even condones the oppression of the vulnerable. Will righteousness be rewarded, and will evil face retribution? Through the prophet Jeremiah, God exhorts the people either to repent of injustice and deliver those who are oppressed or to face destruction.

## THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Our pastor, Rev. Artee Williams, often reminds us that we can obey our way to blessings. He says that we may not have memorized a plethora of Scripture, but we can and should obey what we know. The relationship between obedience, doing the right thing, and blessing goes back to Adam and Eve. Their failure to do the right thing cost them paradise and ushered in sin and death. As the new generation of Israel camped in the plains of Moab poised for the invasion and possession of the Promised Land, Moses warned them against disobeying God and encouraged them to follow the path of truth. Moses set before them the choice of life and prosperity, and death and the curse (see Deuteronomy 30:15-20). Choosing the way of life required consistent obedience—that is, doing the right thing. Throughout His relationship with them up to the final siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, God maintained this requirement for receiving and enjoying blessings. Among His final warnings to Judah and her leaders was the command to do the right thing in order to be spared the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

## THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

In Jeremiah 21, King Zedekiah sent two of his officials to Jeremiah with the request that he go to God on behalf of Judah. This request was made during the Babylonians' final siege of Jerusalem. Zedekiah hoped that God would miraculously intervene and defeat the Babylonians as He had done the Assyrians during the reign of King Hezekiah (see 2 Kings 19:35-36). Through Jeremiah's response the king learned that God refused to defend Jerusalem and was going to fight against it through His invading instrument of punishment, the Babylonians (see 21:4-5). Jeremiah is subsequently sent to the king, his officials, and those in the palace precincts with a final opportunity to mitigate God's wrath against them and preserve David's royal house (chapter 22).

## OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below)

1. How is God's commitment to His covenant with David shown in verses 1-4?
2. What were some visible ways for Judah's rulers to do justice and righteousness? (verse 3)
3. Why is it imperative that God's people live godly lives in the world? (verses 8-9)
4. Why is lost mankind to be mourned more so than a saint who dies in the Lord?

## INSIGHTS

The way to the heart of God is through obedience. More than any sacrificial service or extravagant worship experience, God desires that His people obey Him (see 1 Samuel 15:22). He expects that we do the right thing in every aspect of our lives. Obedience to God does not separate the secular from the spiritual. His Word requires obedience to secular authority (see Romans 13:1-7) as well as to spiritual leaders who have been given authority over His people (see Hebrews 13:17). Doing the right thing does not discriminate in our relationships with others, either. It requires loving our enemies as well as family, friends, and those in the community of faith. God set before Israel the choice of doing the right thing and experiencing life, or doing

the wrong thing and choosing death. To their detriment, they chose the path of consistent, deliberate disobedience and suffered loss of as well as delay of promised blessings. Compassionately, God offered the opportunity to repent and do the right thing even as they were about to taste destruction, death, and exile. What are His redeemed children required to do today? How focused are we on doing the right thing in our homes, communities, and local congregations? If our “blessing inventory” is slack, it may mean that we need to check our consistency in obeying God’s standards and expectations.

## EXPLORATION

Contextually, this lesson calls God’s people to do the right thing, specifically by promoting justice and righteousness. Broadly, this lesson can be used to focus your students on the requirement of obedience to receive and enjoy the blessings of God, individually and collectively. Discuss or emphasize that Judah’s predicament at this time was the result of years of blatant disobedience toward God and each other. They had forsaken their covenant with Him and its requirements. Challenge your students to identify how God’s covenant with His people today (the new covenant) is being forsaken, especially in the areas of doing justice and righteousness. As a class, identify specific ways to be more consistently obedient in these areas.

## ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

### Commentary on Jeremiah 22:1-5

#### KJV

**THUS SAITH the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of *Judah*, and speak there this word,**  
**2 And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:**

**3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no**

**violence to the stranger, the *fatherless*, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.**

**4 For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.**

**5 But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.**

#### NIV

**THIS IS what the LORD says: “Go down to the palace of the king of *Judah* and proclaim this message there:**

**2 “Hear the word of the LORD to you, king of Judah, you who sit on David’s throne—you, your officials and your people who come through these gates.**

**3 “This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the *fatherless* or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.**

**4 “For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people.**

**5 “But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.””**

One of the foundational principles of managing a classroom of students is to refuse to engage a misbehaving student in an argument. A specific technique for this is to identify the misbehavior and then firmly tell the student that “You have a choice: stop the behavior or take the consequence . . . you choose.” By offering the decision to choose, the onus is now on the student and not the teacher. God’s covenant relationship with Israel is similarly based on the principle “you choose.” He provided the standard and it was left up to them to choose to obey and be blessed,

or disobey and be cursed. While the Babylonian army besieged Jerusalem, God gave the king, his officials, and the people the option to choose a way to ensure the continuation of David's dynasty, continued blessings, and averting imminent disaster (verses 1-2). The choice was to do what was just and right and deliver those who had been robbed by their oppressors (verse 3). Additionally, they were to immediately cease the mistreatment of strangers, orphans, and widows, and the shedding of innocent blood. If the choice was to obey this command, they could expect continued blessings—but disobedience would mean the royal palace would become a ruin (verse 5). Daily, the choice is ours to obey or disobey God's commands. The enemy "besieges" us with what is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16), but genuine evidence of our knowing Him is to obey His commandments (see 1 John 2:3). God specifically called Judah and her leaders to do the right thing in this lesson by practicing justice and righteousness. Under the new covenant, the call to implement these practices in the daily lives of His people has not changed. He has set before us the same two options: do the right thing and be blessed, or do wrong and face divine judgment and a loss of blessings—"you choose."



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

*(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)*

- **Adult Question:**

*God commanded Jeremiah's audience to "do justice and righteousness." How can we engage in more doing than talking about the need for social justice and equity in our local communities?*

- **Young Adult Question:**

*We can all identify oppression in our community. Brainstorm different ideas to address the oppressed and bring them closer to deliverance.*

## Commentary on Jeremiah 22:6-10

### KJV

**6 For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house**

**of Judah; Thou art *Gilead* unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited.**

**7 And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.**

**8 And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?**

**9 Then they shall answer, Because they have *forsaken* the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.**

**10 Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.**

### NIV

**6 For this is what the LORD says about the palace of the king of Judah: "Though you are like *Gilead* to me, like the summit of Lebanon, I will surely make you like a wasteland, like towns not inhabited.**

**7 "I will send destroyers against you, each man with his weapons, and they will cut up your fine cedar beams and throw them into the fire.**

**8 "People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?'**

**9 "And the answer will be: 'Because they have *forsaken* the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.'**

**10 Do not weep for the dead king or mourn his loss; rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled, because he will never return nor see his native land again.**

Jeremiah's reference in verses 6-9 is to the royal palace. The royal palace in Jerusalem was known as "Palace of the Forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings 7:2-5; Isaiah 22:8) because it had been constructed with lumber made from the forests of Gilead and



Lebanon (Dyer, C. H. [1985]. *Jeremiah*. In J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* [J. R. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, ed.] [Je. 22:1-12]. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books). As magnificent as the palace was and the degree of God's affinity for it, however, because of the people's disobedience it would be burned by the Babylonians (verses 6-7). The description of what would happen to the royal palace can be said to represent the complete destruction of Jerusalem as the fate of the people for their rebellion against God. The devastation of the royal palace and of the city of Jerusalem would be noticed by other nations. They will ask why God would allow this to happen. Ironically, they would know that it was because God's people failed to keep their covenant responsibilities and had prostituted themselves with other gods (verses 8-9). The people had been judged with the curses promised in Deuteronomy 27:15-26 for their disobedience. Skeptics and the unbelieving among humankind can and do observe God's people. They have a surface knowledge of what His people should be doing and are quick to point out their failures. The challenge, then, is to choose to intentionally do the right thing in every area of life and uphold justice and righteousness.

The closing verses of today's lesson are a message to Shallum, a son of Josiah's who succeeded him when he was killed by Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt. After three months, Shallum was deposed by Neco and taken as a captive to Egypt, where he died (verses 11-12). Apparently, Judah was still mourning the death of his father, Josiah (verse 10). God's message to Judah was to cease weeping for the godly Josiah who died and did not have to witness the destruction of Jerusalem, but weep for the one in exile instead. Why this prohibition? Perhaps the message was that Josiah had been spared the heartbreak of seeing his city destroyed and her people either killed or enslaved. This exiled king would have had to experience the atrocities of war and the agony of never seeing his city again. Even in death, Josiah had experienced the blessing for doing the

right thing. It is the unsaved among humankind who are to be pitied and mourned if they remain unrepentant because of the fate that awaits them. As we mourn because of the fate of the lost, we are also obligated to proclaim the Gospel, vocally and visibly, so that they have the opportunity to enjoy the blessings of being God's children.



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

*(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)*

- **Adult Question:**

*What specific evidence reveals that God's people have not forsaken their covenant responsibilities?*

- **Young Adult Questions:**

(1) *We have all done wrong a time or two in our lives. How did God's punishment and/or chastisement impact your life?*

(2) *In our nation, we have to deal with corrupt political leaders in high places. As believers, how can we ensure that just leaders are put into office in the next elections?*

## LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

— Doing the right thing from God's perspective is not limited to certain areas of our lives. This week, identify an area of your daily walk in which you need to be more consistently obedient. Acknowledge your failure or laxity in this area and commit to become obedient in following God's standard for it.

*(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)*

— There are ample opportunities to do the right thing in our spheres of influence and in the world, especially in terms of aiding those oppressed by injustice. Identify a specific way that your congregation can become active agents of deliverance for victims of oppression and inequitable practices.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

— Sometimes, it is necessary for God to

completely tear us down while in our sin in order for us to rebuild a healthier relationship with Him. It is okay to start over fresh with God. He loves to see His children striving to do their best for Him.

(See *student lesson's "Your World!" section.*)

- In today's society, people are caught up on material ideas and fast money. As Christians, we must make sure that we are not walking over

the poor and underprivileged to get things we need. We must remember to always do the right thing because God is watching.

### NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, May 31, 2020, is "Measure Up!" The Devotional Reading is Deuteronomy 8:11-20, the Background Scripture in Hosea 11-12, and the Printed Text is Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14.



### Closing Prayer

Lord God, it is our desire to do the right thing in our daily walk and our talk. Thank You for the privilege to be part of Your work of justice and righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

<b>MONDAY</b> , May 25	"Receiving a New Vision of God"	(Genesis 28:10-17)
<b>TUESDAY</b> , May 26	"Justice for Gentile Believers"	(Acts 15:10-17)
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> , May 27	"The Up or Down Choice"	(Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 15-19)
<b>THURSDAY</b> , May 28	"Jesus, a Migrant from Egypt"	(Matthew 2:13-15)
<b>FRIDAY</b> , May 29	"Ephraim Spurns God's Love and Suffers"	(Hosea 11:3-6)
<b>SATURDAY</b> , May 30	"Once a Slave; Now a Brother"	(Philemon 8-21)
<b>SUNDAY</b> , May 31	"Respond with Love and Justice Daily"	(Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14)

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

### YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan is designed to provide a more interactive approach to the teaching of today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. It can be formulated to use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

#### *Materials needed:*

- The movie *There Will Be Blood*
- Computers/Speakers
- Wi-Fi

#### **Interaction—Introducing the Lesson** (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "Do the Right Thing."
- Have someone read the "Life Happens" section on page **70** aloud and then, as a class, discuss the corresponding questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "Society often ignores and even condones the oppression of the vulnerable. Will righteousness be rewarded, and will evil face retribution? Through the prophet Jeremiah, God exhorts the people either to repent of injustice and deliver those who are oppressed or to face destruction."

#### **Exploring the Word** (25-30 minutes)

- Show the clip "Is There a Sinner Here?" from the movie *There Will Be Blood*, directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. This can be found at [www.wingclips.com](http://www.wingclips.com). Share this: "Daniel reluctantly accepts Eli's invitation to confess his sins in front of the congregation and get baptized." Discuss what leads people to accept God's invitation to repent when it is difficult to confess that they have done wrong. Discuss the freedom that comes with repentance.
- Have someone read Jeremiah 22:1-4.

- Discuss the significance of God's pressing on the king of Judah to be just and do what is right. List what God constitutes as doing what is right.
- Think of world leaders who have and are able to perform the tasks mentioned here.
- Have someone read Jeremiah 22:5-10.
- The consequences for not doing what is right are harsh. Discuss why that is so.
- Discuss why the Lord would prohibit mourning the death of a godly king (Josiah) and command weeping for the exile of an evil king (Jehoaahaz).
- Failing to heed to God's warning to do what is right leads to a break in covenant. Share examples, in the history of the people of God, of ways the new covenant is neglected in ways that are parallel with the forsaking of the old covenant. Discuss again the importance of being in covenant with God and its connection to justice.

#### **Life Application** (10 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page **74**.

#### **Life Response** (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page **74**.
- Identify ways that you can become active agents of deliverance for the oppressed in your community.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.