



“This is the Story...”

Written by Talashia Keim Yoder and Daniel Yoder. Artwork by Christa and Jonathan Reuel.
Song lyrics and music by Jonathan Reuel.

Week 16: Do Not Destroy

Psalm 57

Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/2PfNvWeBKtU>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel to be a bridge between the people and God. As the people demanded a king, Samuel would become the prophet who anointed kings.

- **Key verses:** Psalm 57:1; Psalm 57:7

Tell the story: The people of Israel looked around, and saw that everyone else had a king. They wanted one, too. They were warned that kings would oppress them, but they demanded it anyway. So God worked through Samuel to anoint kings to lead the people. First came Saul, then David, who would be the most famous king of Israel. David missed the mark a lot, but he was called the “man after God’s own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14). This doesn’t mean that David behaved like God. It means that David’s worship of God was blameless (remember that phrase from the Noah story?). We know that David played the lyre and sang, and some of the Psalms are attributed to him. This week’s scripture is a psalm that has been connected to a story in 1 Samuel 22. The changing of power from Saul to David was not peaceful or easy, and in this story, David is hiding from Saul in a cave.

- Read Psalm 57

Prime the pump:

- **Contextual Reading:** This psalm is connected to a story in 1 Samuel 22. Consider reading this story (which really begins a few chapters earlier) to understand the psalm in a deeper way.
- **Things to notice:**
 - The first line of the Psalm repeats itself. Imagine hiding from something you feared and repeating this line. Another translation is, “Grant me grace, God, grant me grace.” It’s almost a mantra, something we repeat to help center ourselves. A repeated prayer.
 - Psalms usually have a transition point where they come back to trust in God. In this psalm, that happens at verse 7. Notice the mirroring with verse 1.
 - Verse one talks about taking shelter in the shadow of God’s wings. This kind of parental protection is common in scripture.
 - There’s a lot of “steadfast” going on in here! These are not all the same Hebrew words - some are *hesed*, the word we learned about in the Ruth and Naomi story. Some are more

literally translated as “firm.” But all imply something unwavering. Notice all these words in the psalm - maybe count them or list them out in some way.

- **Background information about the psalms:**

- The Hebrew term for “psalm” is *mizmor*, which means “something sung.” But the name of the book of Psalms in the Jewish tradition is *Tehilim*, which means “Praises.”
- Like modern poetry, the psalms are meant to be read in all kinds of ways! Some of them are acrostics (in Hebrew, each line begins with the next letter of the alphabet). Many are chiasms, which means they’re written kind of like a palindrome. Whatever is in the middle of that chiasm is often the most important part. Chiastic structure is actually found in many places in the Bible, and once you start looking for chiasms it’s hard to stop! If you’re intrigued, [look up more about it!](#)
- When you see a psalm that says “of David,” that “of” can also be translated “for.” We don’t know definitively who wrote each Psalm, but these descriptions do help us understand their inspiration. Like our modern music, these psalms probably developed over time. They were produced by many different poets over probably 500 years.
- Robert Alter summarizes the purpose of the Psalms like this: “...the psalm was a multifaceted poetic form serving many different purposes, some cultic and others not, and it played a vital role in the life of the Israelite community and of individuals within that community throughout the biblical period.” (*Alter, Robert. 2019. The Hebrew Bible, vol. 3: The Writings. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, pg. 8.*)
- The psalmic tradition is similar to the literature of the cultures that surrounded the people of God. We can hear echoes of those cultures in our Psalms. For example, the warrior-god is similar to the Canaanite Baal. Knowing this could be cause for discomfort - or we can look at our own worship and its intermingling with the culture, and see that this has long been a part of our evolving worship.

- **Conversation starters:**

- This prayer intermingles cries and supplications to God, complaining, descriptions of entrapment, trust, fear, declarations of what God will do, ill-wishes for enemies - all of this in one poetic and brief prayer. If you used this psalm as inspiration or guide, what might your prayer be in your present situation?
- The psalm ends with perspective. God is big, so much bigger than present circumstances. What would happen if this kind of perspective was woven into your prayer life in this time, in this place?
- Read verse 8. This lovely poetry talks about awakening creation with music. Maybe you want to try this...

Microsong: “Do Not Destroy” (Listen: https://youtu.be/06Rt19W_Rwc)

God gives them a prophet; they ask for a king. Still God loves us; Can a mother forget her children? Do not destroy...

In this cave I cry to You; You will send and save me. In the shade of Your wings I hide until destruction passes by.

So send out your generous love. My soul is here among the hungry lions. Wake up my soul, wake up, it’s early! Above it all, O God, place your love and glory.

Wake up my song, wake up, it’s early! Above it all, O God, place your love and glory.

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/cTo4ETkzZbM>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood and a rainbow sign, God’s love written on skin and sky,

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ohhh ooohhh

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is saved from famine.

God’s family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.

Ten strange signs say “Please release them!” By the sea God saves them. Ahhhhhhhhhh.

The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.
Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!"
*Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God. God is One, only God!"*
Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.
God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.
Ruth's worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.
Corruption in the temple, and God sends Samuel.
God gives them a prophet, They ask for a king.
God loves every one of us, it's true. And God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!



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Week 17: Watch Over It Anyway

1 Kings 8

Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/qka-thB4hk>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel to be a bridge between the people and God. Prophets like Samuel would continue to try to keep the people faithful to God in the time of the kings, beginning with Saul and David.

- **Key verse:** 1 Kings 8:27

Tell the story: David wanted to build God a temple - a permanent house. God’s response was that God didn’t really need a house, but if the people really wanted to build one, the builder would need to be someone who wasn’t a warrior-king like David. So the job of building the temple fell to Solomon, David’s son, the third king of Israel. The temple was made with many materials, by many skilled artisans. It took seven years to build. And when it was finished, the people gathered to dedicate it. Even though this great and beautiful temple had been built, Solomon reminded the people that it is not possible to contain God in a house. It is a house of worship, but it is not where God lives.

- Read 1 Kings 8. Or if you want a shorter section to read, try 1 Kings 8:1-6, 12-27, 41-43, 65-66.
- Read page 99 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - In 1 Kings 8:31-53, notice the variety of examples Solomon gives of ways that this temple might be a symbol of God’s presence. Do you hear echoes of other stories you know?
 - Notice verses 41-43. What promise/covenant does this remind you of? How is the story continuing?
 - Notice verses 46-52. There is some foreshadowing here!
- **Background information:**
 - There is a wealth of online information about the layout and design of the temple. If you are intrigued by this, look it up and explore it further!
 - Solomon’s words in verses 41-43 can be read as a reminder of the inclusiveness of God’s love. They can also be a reflection of Solomon’s attitude toward surrounding nations. Whether in taking wives or trading, Solomon tended not to be an isolationist. In fact, he did a lot of trading with one particular king, King Hiram, to build the temple.

- **Conversation starters:**

- The temple is a big deal. It would be the central gathering place and a center of identity. But it is complicated. God is clear that God will not be confined to a building. If you are reading this in the midst of a pandemic, how does this strike you?
- This dedication is described as happening in October during Succoth, or the Feast of Tabernacles/Festival of Booths. During this festival, the people gathered in Jerusalem and lived outdoors to remember God's provision in the wilderness. It was a good time to hold the dedication, because it was a time that the people would be gathered anyway. But consider, was there some irony in a dedication of a structure like this during a festival that celebrated the simplicity of God's provision when the people lived in impermanent tents and God led by a pillar of fire and cloud? Wrestle with this.
- What might be the political benefits to Solomon in the building of this temple?

Microsong: "Watch over it anyway" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/nsyzgXqFyBU>)

Does God need a temple to live here on earth? The universe could not contain God, much less this place; watch over it anyway!

Let Your name be here. Listen and forgive. Bring justice and save us. Provide like You promised.

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/Ui9eQY4LFC4>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood
and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ohhh ohhhh

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is saved from famine.

God's family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses. *Ten strange signs say "Please release them!" By the sea God saves them.* Ohh ohhh.

The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.

Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!"

Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God. God is One, only God!"

Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.

God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.

Ruth's worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.

Corruption in the temple, then God sends Samuel.

God gives them a prophet, They ask for a king

Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets

God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!



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Week 18: A Nation Tears Apart

1 Kings 11-12

Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/-xZiTAMsp2I>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel to be a bridge between the people and God. Prophets like Samuel would continue to try to keep the people faithful to God in the time of the kings, beginning with Saul and David. David’s son Solomon, the third king of Israel, built a temple in Jerusalem to be a gathering place for worship of God.

- **Key verses:** 1 Kings 11:11; 1 Kings 11:37-38; 1 Kings 12:16; 1 Kings 12:22-24

Tell the story: The kings of Israel were human beings, and they often missed the mark. King Solomon began to worship other gods. A prophet named Ahijah prophesied to a man named Jeroboam that he would become king of the ten northern tribes, leaving only two for the kingdom of the descendants of Solomon. Jeroboam fled to safety in Egypt, and after Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king, Jeroboam led a rebellion that ended in the establishment of two kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Soon, though, Jeroboam also initiated idol worship in Israel. The cycle of missing the mark continued. God stuck with the people by speaking through faithful prophets.

- Read 1 Kings 11-12. Or if you want a shorter section to read, try 1 Kings 11:1-6; 9-13; 26-43; 1 Kings 12:1-16; 20-33
- There is no corresponding *Shine On* story, but the story on page 101 may be helpful for families.

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - Solomon is said to have had a thousand wives, most of them from foreign countries. Notice what it is about having all of these wives that Solomon gets in trouble for.
 - 1 Kings 11:42 says that Solomon reigned for forty years. This is a typological number. Where else do you remember forty years from the stories we have already read?
 - “High places” and altars play a big role in these stories. Notice all the times one of these places is described. Is it positive or negative? Notice the description of Jeroboam’s altars in 1 Kings 12:28. What does that remind you of?
 - Notice which country shelters Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11:40. Hmm...
 - Notice who Rehoboam listens to in Kings 6-14. This tendency has apparently been around for a long time.

- **Background information:**
 - The story of tearing of clothing in 1 Kings 11:29-32 reflects back on a story in 1 Samuel 15:27-28. Look it up and see if it gives you some insight into this story.
 - This passage has a parallel telling of the same story in 2 Chronicles 10-11. If that interests you, read the Chronicles story and find the similarities and differences.
 - Maps make this story intriguing! [This map](#) can help you visualize the story.
 - The festival described in 1 Kings 12:33 refers to Succoth. But it is a month later than the same festival in the south.
- **Conversation starters:**
 - Solomon had a thousand wives. Jacob had two wives and two concubines. What was acceptable in marriage certainly changed over the course of history. How much of this change do you think was a change in culture, and how much was a change in understanding of God's will?
 - Shechem, where Rehoboam comes for his coronation, is in the north. It is interesting that this is the chosen place for this event instead of Jerusalem. What might have been the political reasons for this?

Microsong: "A Nation Tears Apart" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/HbNjOt9Deuo>)

The wisest king forgets rule one, his son becomes a bully.

A nation tears apart that day, and both parts lose their way and lose the heart God loved in David.

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/NfyWug4brT4>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood
and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, oh oh

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
saved from famine.

God's family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.

Ten strange signs say "Please release them!" By the sea God saves them. Ohh ohhh.

The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.

Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!"

*Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!"*

Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.

God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.

Ruth's worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.

Corruption in the temple, and God sends Samuel.

God gives them a prophet, They ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.

And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart.

And loses David's heart.....

God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!



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Week 19: In Desperate Times

1 Kings 17

Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/Jcm8NtHhI9c>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel to be a bridge between the people and God. Prophets like Samuel would continue to try to keep the people faithful to God in the time of the kings, beginning with Saul and David. David’s son Solomon, the third king of Israel, built a temple in Jerusalem to be a gathering place for worship of God. But Solomon and all the kings continued to miss the mark, and the kingdom divided into the north (Israel) and the south (Judah).

- **Key verses:** 1 Kings 17:13-14; 24

Tell the story: Through a series of kings who often missed the mark and led the people away from God, the prophets kept up the prophetic vision. They continued to call the people back to God. Elijah was one of these prophets. He was a prophet of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. When King Ahab led the people to worship a false god, Baal, Elijah warned the people of a drought. Fleeing Ahab’s wrath, Elijah lived by a river for a time, cared for by God. When the river dried up, God told him to go to a widow in Phoenician territory (north of Israel). Elijah asked the widow for food, and she said she couldn’t give him any, because she had just enough for one last meal for herself and her son. Elijah told her that if she fed him, she and her son would have enough until the drought was over. She did as he asked, and just like Elijah had said, she had enough. She provided Elijah a home, and after a time, her son got very sick. Through Elijah, God healed the boy.

- Read 1 Kings 17
- Read page 103 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - Time to get out the map again! [This map](#) shows some of the sites of Elijah’s travels. If you want to catch the Bible talking to itself, look at stories of Jesus and his travels in Mark 6-8.
 - Zaraphath is not part of Israel. It’s in Phoenicia, the heart of Baal territory. Read this story about the widow while keeping who she is and where she is in mind.
- **Background information:**
 - Elijah’s name means, “My god is the LORD.” He spends much of his life trying to bring the people back from worship of false gods.

- Baal is understood to be the god of the weather. What do you think God might be communicating by bringing about a drought?
- In I Kings 17:18, when the woman says, “You have come to bring my sin to remembrance,” she is not talking about some great sin she committed. People of this time and region had the understanding that affliction, or bad things happening to them, were retribution for something they had done. She may not even have any sin in mind, she just assumes that she’s being punished for something she did.
- **Conversation starters:**
 - Elijah figures prominently in the story of Jesus. Maybe you want to look up some of those references. Why do you think Jesus is so often compared to Elijah? Find some of the parallels.
 - The woman’s trust of Elijah and recognition of his God is remarkable. Read and discuss the story with empathy and imagine her experience.

Microsong: “In Desperate Times” (Listen: https://youtu.be/LI7GvB_GYnc)
 Through a widow’s gift and a prophet’s cry God gives life in desperate times.

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/4q0jVnUII2U>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.
 Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood
 and a rainbow sign, God’s love written on skin and sky,
Then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ohh ohhh
 A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
 saved from famine.
 God’s family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God, God sends Moses.
Ten strange signs say “Please release them!” By the sea God saves them. Ohh ohhh.
 The people complain. God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.
 Five sisters come and ask for land. God says “Yes, amend the law!”
*Moses says, “In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
 being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!”*
 Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.
 God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.
 Ruth’s worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.
 Corruption in the temple, and God sends Samuel.
 God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.
 And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart.
 And loses David’s heart.....
 Through a widow’s gift and a prophet’s cry. God brings life in desperate times.
God loves every one of us, it’s true, and God loves the universe.

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Week 20: Scrolls and Consequences

2 Kings 22:1-23:25

Intro Video: https://youtu.be/7wbF_4ADwxE

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel, to be a bridge between the people and God. Prophets like Samuel would continue to try to keep the people faithful to God in the time of the kings, beginning with Saul and David. David’s son Solomon, the third king of Israel, built a temple in Jerusalem to be a gathering place for worship of God. But Solomon and all the kings continued to miss the mark, and the kingdom divided into the north (Israel) and the south (Judah). Prophets like Elijah kept God’s vision alive and continued to call the people back to God.

- **Key verses:** 2 Kings 22:2; 2 Kings 22:11; 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Kings 23:25

Tell the story: Almost 300 years after the northern and southern kingdoms divided, Josiah became king of Judah. He was just eight years old, and he followed God’s ways. When he was 26, he began repairs of the temple that Solomon had built. During these repairs, the priest Hilkiah discovered a book of the law in the temple. Josiah was very upset when he heard the words of the law, because he realized that no one was following them or even remembered them. He sent some people to ask Huldah, the prophetess, what he should do. Huldah brought a message from God, saying that God was very angry with the people, but that because God knew that Josiah was truly sorry, God would not bring disaster on the land of Judah while Josiah was alive. Josiah renewed the covenant with God. He ordered the destruction of all the idols and temples for other gods. Under Josiah’s rule, the people once again celebrated Passover and came back to the law of Moses. The Bible says that Josiah “turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.”

- Read 2 Kings 22:1-23:25. Or if you want a shorter section to read, try 2 Kings 22:1-2; 2 Kings 22:8-20; 2 Kings 23:1-4; 2 Kings 23:21-25
- Read page 112 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - What do the words of 2 Kings 23:25 remind you of? Now look at 2 Kings 23:3.
 - Huldah is a woman - the only female prophet to be named in the Bible. Notice that this is not considered particularly noteworthy in the text. Wonder - may there have been others that aren’t named?

- **Background information:**
 - At this point in the story, it may be helpful to look at a table of the kings of Israel and Judah. [This one](#) maps them out well, although the “good/evil” labels on the kings may be lacking in nuance.
 - What is the book of the law that was found??? Scholarly consensus is that it was some form of what we now know as the book of Deuteronomy. It would not have been identical, since the form we have now dates to the Babylonian exile - which hasn’t happened yet in this story!
 - Scholars also are fairly unanimous in thinking that the core of this book was actually composed at this time to centralize worship in Jerusalem and to do away with paganism.
 - If you read 2 Kings 23:5-20, you’ll notice a lot of burning of human bones. What?! Doing this on an altar was permanent defilement - by burning human bones, Josiah made sure sacrifices would never happen on these altars again.
- **Conversation starters:**
 - The prophet Huldah says that Josiah will die in peace. In 2 Kings 23:29, we learn about Josiah’s death. Do you think Huldah’s prophecy was true? What does it mean to die in peace?
 - Notice all the destruction of temples and monuments and statues that are ordered in this passage. Why did all of these things need to be destroyed? Wrestle with that in connection with current events.

Microsong: “Scrolls and Consequences” (Listen: <https://youtu.be/wKFx-lQiqTI>)
High priest finds the scroll of law. Josiah reads, and tears his clothes. Huldah prophesies judgement and desolation. Josiah cries and changes like David did before him. It doesn’t stop the consequences; but it postpones them.

Sing the big song: (Listen: https://youtu.be/LNj7DaUE_s0)
This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.
Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood
and a rainbow sign, God’s love written on skin and sky,
And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ohhh ohhhh
A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
saved from famine.
God’s family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.
Ten strange signs say “Please release them!” By the sea God saves them. Ohhhh ohhh.
The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.
Five sisters come and ask for land. God says “Yes, amend the law!”
*Moses says, “In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!”*
Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.
God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.
Ruth’s worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.
Corruption in the temple, then God sends Samuel.
God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.
And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart. And loses David’s heart.....
Through a widow’s gift and a prophet’s cry. God brings life in desperate times.
Josiah reads a misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly. Like David did. In his time.
God loves every one of us, it’s true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!



“This is the Story...”

Written by Talashia Keim Yoder and Daniel Yoder. Artwork by Christa and Jonathan Reuel.
Song lyrics and music by Jonathan Reuel.

Week 21: Is There Any Hope Left For You, Jerusalem

Jeremiah 13

Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/QtwAhYBr6 E>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God gave the people a new leader, Joshua, and through miraculous works brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. God called a young boy, Samuel, to be a bridge between the people and God. Prophets like Samuel would continue to try to keep the people faithful to God in the time of the kings, beginning with Saul and David. David’s son Solomon, the third king of Israel, built a temple in Jerusalem to be a gathering place for worship of God. But Solomon and all the kings continued to miss the mark, and the kingdom divided into the north (Israel) and the south (Judah). Prophets like Elijah kept God’s vision alive and continued to call the people back to God. Huldah, another prophetess, helped young King Josiah interpret the book of the law that was discovered in the temple and bring the people back to God for a generation.

- **Key verses:** Jeremiah 13:11

Tell the story: The northern kingdom of Israel “fell to,” or was conquered by the Assyrians in about 722 BCE. About a hundred years after that, Jeremiah prophesied in the southern kingdom of Judah. During his time of being a prophet, Judah fell to the Babylonians. There are several “object lessons” in Jeremiah’s life with God, and this story is one of those. The Lord told Jeremiah to go buy himself a loincloth and wear it. Then he was to bury it, and, after a time, to recover it - now ruined. God then compared the loincloth to the people of Israel. God sticks with the people, but there are huge consequences for their actions.

- Read Jeremiah 13 (or for just the loincloth story, Jeremiah 13:1-14)

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - Because this part of the Bible isn’t as linear in its narration, it is harder to keep a steady timeline of what is happening here! Consider creating a timeline of the events of Part 5 - and maybe you want to continue it with Part 6. Notice how long (or short) the time frame is between these stories we’re reading.
 - If you’ve been mapping, find Parath on a map.
 - Read 13:14. Does that make you squirm? Sit with that. Wrestle with it.
- **Background information:**
 - A loincloth is, essentially, underwear. God compares the people of Israel to underwear, and God’s self to the “loins.” Read verse 11. What does this mean?

- When a loincloth is ruined, it exposes the genitals. What kind of “exposure” do you think Jeremiah and God might be worried about for the Israelites?
- In verse 1, God tells Jeremiah not to enter water/dip the loincloth in water. Some interpret this to mean Jeremiah is to wear the loincloth and get it dirty before burying it, and some think it may be to ensure that the loincloth is not altered or damaged before it’s buried.
- The bit about jars filled with wine in verses 12-14 can be confusing, and it’s written to be a kind of riddle. The people are telling Jeremiah that jars are made to be filled. The riddle is that they’re filled with *wine*, causing them to be unstable and liable to fall. They think they’re fine, doing what they’re meant to do, but really, they’re setting themselves up for disaster.
- Verse 17 is intriguing. First, it shows a window into God’s longings for the people. There is also an interesting word at work, which the NRSV translates as “pride.” The Hebrew word here is *geiwah*, an obscure word. “Pride” as its translation is only a guess. Robert Alter tells us that it also has been connected with a word in Job that can mean “community.” (Alter, Robert. 2019. *The Hebrew Bible, vol. 2: Prophets*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, pg. 905.) Read the passage with that word, and it changes considerably!
- Here’s a window into the tough job biblical translators have to do. The NRSV translation flips verse 27b - the original Hebrew has what NRSV translates as “How long will it be” last in the passage. But the literal Hebrew translation is “after when still.” (Alter, Robert. 2019. *The Hebrew Bible, vol. 2: Prophets*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, pg. 907.)
- **Conversation starters:**
 - Jeremiah wasn’t terribly popular, because his messages for the people were often critical of their behavior and often predicted the fall of Jerusalem. So he was imprisoned and persecuted. He seemed to see his role as a prophet as perpetual torment. Yet he faithfully prophesied. Wonder about the sense of calling that would lead a person to do something so unpopular and unpleasant.
 - This story, like many of Jeremiah’s stories, lends itself to enactment and humor. Here is a [video of Ted Schwartz’s](#) dramatic interpretation of this story. Try retelling the story. Play with the verbs and nouns. Discover the humor. Why is it that humor has such power to make us listen and see things in new ways?

Microsong: “Is There any Hope Left for You, Jerusalem” (Listen: <https://youtu.be/bofGNumsTaM>)

God gives Jeremiah a picture of God’s ruined family...

Is there any hope left, is there any hope left, is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem? Any hope? Any hope left? Is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem?

Sing the big song: (Listen: https://youtu.be/CNiM3_cIKxM)

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And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ohh ohhh

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
saved from famine.

God’s family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.

Ten strange signs day “Please release them!” By the sea God saves them. Ohh ohhh.

The people complain God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.

Five sisters come and ask for land. God says “Yes, amend the law!”

*Moses says, “In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!”*

Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.

God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.

Ruth’s worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.

Corruption in the temple, and God sends Samuel.

God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.

And when a bully rules the land, a nation tears apart. And loses David’s heart.....

Through a widow's gift and a prophet's cry. God brings life in desperate times.
Josiah reads a misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly. Like David did. In his time.
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Is there any hope left, is there any hope left, is there any hope left for you Jerusalem? Any hope?
Any hope left? Is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem?
God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.

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