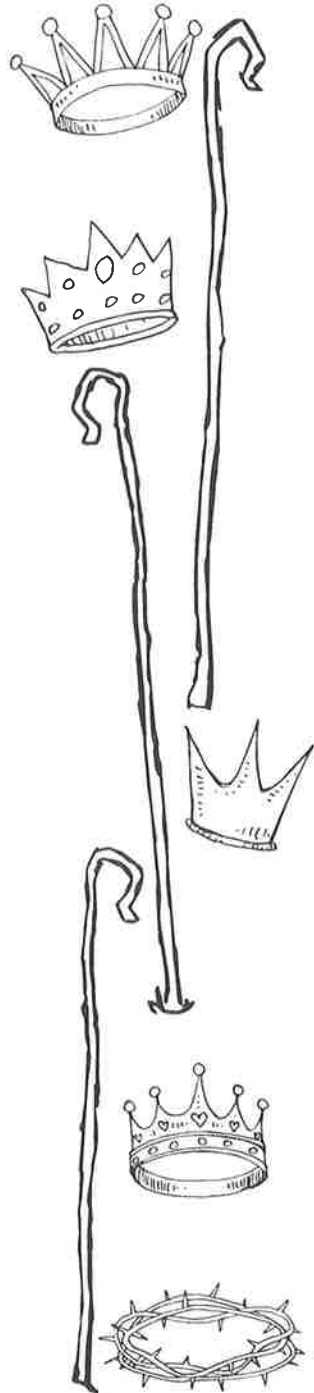


Jeremiah's Bad News and Good News

based on Jeremiah 23:1-6



When Jeremiah was a young man, God said to him, "You are to be my prophet to all countries."

"Not me," said Jeremiah. "I'm young. I don't know how to speak before crowds of people."

But God didn't take that for an excuse. "I will be with you, Jeremiah," God said. "I will put my words in your mouth."

Jeremiah was God's prophet for many years. God did give him words to say, but sometimes they were words that the people, especially the rulers, didn't like.

Some bad rulers had been in charge of Judah and Israel, the two nations of God's people. They paid little attention to the people and cared only for themselves. The people were afraid God had forgotten them. Here is the message from God that Jeremiah had for the rulers and for the people:

Watch out, you rulers and kings who act like bad shepherds! You hurt my people so they have been scattered all over. You say you are caring for my people, but you are not! You have not taken care of them at all! I will take care of you! I will gather the few people who are left and bring them back to my country like a shepherd gathers the flock. They will increase in number. I will give them leaders and kings who treat them like good shepherds treat their flocks. My people will not be afraid any more, declares God!

A time will come, says God, when I will give my people a fair and just ruler from the family of King David. When this ruler is in charge, the countries of Judah and Israel will live in safety. This ruler will be called the King of Fairness and Justice!

How do you think the rulers looked when they heard these words from God through Jeremiah?

Contemporary Shepherd-Leaders

