

GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM LEARNING EXPERIENCE
FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

JEREMIAH'S CALL

These sermon outlines are provided as part of your Large Group Viewing License*. In addition to showing the films in conjunction with a sermon, consider the other ways you can share the *God Provides*™ message with others.

LARGE GROUP VIEWING IDEAS

- Show one or all of these films in the *God Provides*™ Film Learning Experience to your entire congregation.
- Rent a movie theater and sponsor a local movie night in your community.
- Share the films in conjunction with local mission work.
- Host a “Lunch and Learn Movie Experience” with your coworkers or employees.

LARGE GROUP LICENSE - PACKAGE FEATURES

Don't forget to use all of the materials available with your Large Group Viewing License. Go to Crown.org/GodProvides, click on “Group Licensing,” enter your unique License Code, and download the following materials:

- **Six Downloadable Trailers** for each short film.
- **Sermon Outlines** provide pastors with a message based on each short film.
- **Promotional Materials** such as posters, bulletin inserts, tickets and more are provided in digital format to promote the learning experience.
- **License Certificate** enables unlimited viewings for groups larger than 100.

For additional help or questions, please call 1-800-249-6320 or visit us online at Crown.org/GodProvides.

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BEFORE AND AFTER THIS SERMON

- 1** Before using this sermon, contact your local Crown Consultative Servant who can assist you in developing a financial ministry plan to provide ongoing guidance for your church members after the sermons are delivered in your church. Go to Crown.org and click “In My Area” to find a local servant.

- 2** While using this sermon, become familiar with the *God Provides™* Web site. It offers solid biblical insight that can help your church members. In particular, encourage your congregation to do any of the following:
 - a. Purchase a copy of the *God Provides™ Companion Guide*, and continue a personal study of each short film.
 - b. Listen or Podcast Crown’s radio programs for daily wisdom and encouragement.
 - c. Sign up for free e-communication to get monthly articles and advice on a variety of financial topics. Go to Crown.org/SignUp to register.

- 3** After using this sermon, take your church members to the next level in their journey by encouraging them to do some of the following:
 - a. **Start Some *God Provides™* Small Groups** – encourage your church members to go deeper in studying the principles in these films. Small groups can view the films as part of an effective learning experience using the available *God Provides™ Companion Guide*.
 - b. **Encourage Next Step Resources** – encourage your church members to apply the biblical principles they’ve learned in practical ways. **Next Step Resources** from Crown can help them. See the last page of this document for details.

*A large group is defined as showing a short film to more than 100 people at one time. For 100 people or fewer, a large group viewing license is not required. A *God Provides™* Companion Guide is recommended for each participant. Additional Companion Guides are sold separately.



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“GOD’S DESIGN FOR HOPE”

(referencing the film, *Jeremiah’s Call*, adapted from Jeremiah 29:1-14)

[Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation’s specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete *God Provides™ Film Learning Experience*.]

Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

More than 2,500 years ago, on the seventh day of the fifth month, during the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had a very bad, terrible day.

The Babylonian army broke down all the walls around Jerusalem and carried into exile the Jewish people who were still alive.

And God allowed this to happen in order to punish His people for their unfaithfulness to Him. He loved them too much to abandon them to their sinful ways, and used their hardships in exile to discipline and teach them to obey Him.

God knew that only then would His people find true hope and experience purposeful living.

To give the exiles hope, God gave His prophet, Jeremiah, a special word for them—and it had to be delivered in person to the Jewish elders, priests, and prophets in Babylon.

Unfortunately, Jewish exiles pretending to be prophets had been spreading lies among the people—what the Bible describes as “false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds” (Jeremiah 14:14).

It was a difficult time for God’s people.

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It was time for God's true prophetic word to be revealed!

In the film segment you are about to see, which is recorded in Jeremiah 29:1-14, a true prophet of God is starting to read Jeremiah's message that has just arrived in Babylon.

As you watch the film, listen carefully to what God required the exiles to do. Think about the level of faith such obedience required and why treating their Babylonian captors this way would have been really unusual.



Play Film Clip of *Jeremiah's Call* (approx. 2 mins. 42 secs. long)

* Start: (6 mins. and 27 secs. into the film) when narrator says, "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says. . . ."

* End: After the prophet of God reads Jeremiah 29:11-13, which starts with: "For I know the plans I have for you." (approx. 9 mins. 9 secs. into the film)

Key Message

The people from Jerusalem arrived in Babylon with nothing. They were refugees. They had to start over completely.

But God didn't abandon them. In His timing He sent them specific instructions through Jeremiah about how to start over again and become the obedient people they needed to be in order to be His witnesses to the world.

As you saw, the false prophets did not believe the Word of God, but the purposes of God cannot be thwarted. The leaders of the exiles recognized God's truth.

Instead of resisting their captors, the exiles from Jerusalem were to settle down. Build houses. Plant gardens. Get married and have babies. And even seek the peace and prosperity of Babylon—a pagan city.

Imagine praying for people who had killed your friends and family members—and carried you away as captives to a distant land. Not easy for the exiles to do, right? Yet God still commanded them to do it.

After they had spent seventy years of exile, God promised to come and bring them back to Jerusalem! Think of the joy the exiles felt in their hearts. They no doubt remembered the glories of Jerusalem and desired to return to their home country.

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God not only had special plans for them in Babylon—He would prosper them. Keep them safe. Give them hope—a future to look forward to. Even though they were captives.

What was the key to all of these blessings from God?

God’s people needed to return to Him. To be faithful to Him. To not pursue false gods and listen to false prophets.

God’s people needed to call to Him and pray to Him—not to other gods.

And God promised that they would find Him—when they sought Him with all their heart.

Today, our loving and faithful God cares just as much about us today as He did about the exiles! His prophetic words for those exiles still apply to us today no matter how difficult our lives may be.

1 God offers His people hope through Jesus Christ – even in the middle of their trials.

No matter how difficult your situation may be—illness, financial issues, an addiction, a loved one who suffers, job uncertainty, fear of what the future holds . . . God is faithful. He knows what you are experiencing and longs for you to draw close to Him and receive the hope only He can provide.

Key Verses:

*No one whose hope is in you
will ever be put to shame.”
Show me your ways, O LORD,
teach me your paths;
guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long. —Psalm 25:3-5*

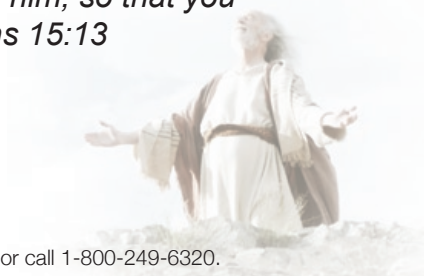
*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through
endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
—Romans 15:4*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you
may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. —Romans 15:13*

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Additional Verses:

*A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.
But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.
We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield. —Psalm 33:17-20*

*Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint. —Isaiah 40:30-31*

*The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;
it is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD. —Lamentations 3:25-26*

*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know
the to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and
his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his
mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and
seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority,
power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but
also in the one to come. —Ephesians 1:18-21*

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has
given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for
you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation
that is ready to be revealed in the last time. —1 Peter 1:3-5*

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2 God loves His people dearly. The *specific instructions* He gave the exiles through His prophecy also *apply to us today*.

Before God’s prophetic message arrived, the exiles no doubt wondered if their lives would ever return to “normal.” Uprooted from their nation, forced to live in a new country with a different language and culture, they certainly could not rely on themselves. The possessions they had accumulated were captured. Their very identity as God’s people was in doubt. They seemed to have no control over their future and no hope for the present.

Then God stepped directly into their lives.

Today, God is still with His people—everyone who has chosen to follow Jesus. He is aware of our hurts, our struggles, our confusion, our sense that sometimes our lives are spinning out of control.

But, as the exiles experienced, God often does not “rescue” us from all our problems—at least not right away.

If our difficulties have been caused by our wrongdoing—our sinfulness—God may allow us to reap the consequences of our attitudes and actions—to be disciplined and learn the hard lessons He wants us to learn.

No matter how discouraged we may feel, He desires us to know that He is still with us. Guiding us. Drawing us into a deeper relationship with Himself. Teaching us about His Word—the Bible. Directing us down the path of obedience that will bring us a truly abundant life.

Why? God loves us!

Let’s consider the specific instructions God gave the exiles and how each of them relates to us.

A. We are to be *content* with our circumstances, placing our faith in God to provide everything we need.

Today many people are not content. Trying to find contentment, they go into debt to buy possessions they hope will make them happy. They bounce from religion to religion and from relationship to relationship. They desire more and more money, more status, more security, more . . . of so many things.

It is all too easy to compare our situations to those of other people—our friends, our neighbors, our coworkers.

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If only we will choose to experience the truth of Hebrews 13:5: “Be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”

Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. —1 Timothy 6:6-7

I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. —Philippians 4:10-13

*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”
—Hebrews 13:5*

*O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise. —Psalm 51:15-17*

B. We are to work, earn an income, and be happy with the fruits of our labors.

Even though they lived in a foreign country, God still wanted the exiles to apply their skills and abilities as best they could in order to earn money and provide for their families. Pretty basic instruction, right? But in their situation, it would have been all too easy for them to do as little work as they could for the Babylonians. To “get by.” To become lazy and dependent on other people for their income. But God knew that they would need to develop resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility, to hone the personal gifts he had given them . . . in order to train their families and prepare them for their future in Jerusalem.

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Today, God desires no less from us. Who knows what plans He has for you, how He desires to prepare you for what is ahead?

Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

*May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands. —Psalm 90:17*

*Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
who walk in his ways.
You will eat the fruit of your labor;
blessings and prosperity will be yours. —Psalm 128:1-2*

*All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty. —Proverbs 14:23*

*Finish your outdoor work
and get your fields ready;
after that, build your house. —Proverbs 24-27*

*A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.
She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.*

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*She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.
When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple. . . .
Give her the reward she has earned,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. —Proverbs 31:10-31*

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the
Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and
there is no favoritism. —Colossians 3:23-25*

C. We are to build strong and lasting relationships, which are best formed and nurtured as we commit them to God and seek His help in living out the principles in the Bible in those relationships.

Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." —Genesis 2:18

*A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. —Proverbs 18:24*

*Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father,
and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. —Proverbs 27:10*

*Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their work. —Ecclesiastes 4:9*

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*Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.*

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. —Ecclesiastes 4:12

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown. —Proverbs 12:4

Related Stories from the Bible

Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them and they wept aloud and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!"

At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-by, but Ruth clung to her.

"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."

—Ruth 1:8-17

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

—1 Samuel 18:1-4

D. It is important for us to pray for those around us and for those in authority over us.

The exiles prayed for their Babylonian captors, and as the Babylonians prospered so did God's people. Why? Obviously God answers the prayers of His obedient people. But there's

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even more here to think about.

What happens when we pray for someone we don't like, or someone in authority over us, and ask God to bless that person? God also begins to work in us. To give us more love for that person. To give us the heart-felt desire to work harder for an insensitive boss. To be more patient with a rude neighbor. To be willing to share our time with someone who seems to take us for granted.

Something else also happens. The light of Jesus penetrates the darkness of people's minds and hearts—and He uses our love to do this. As we pray for such people, our own actions and attitudes become more like those of Jesus, who told us to pray for our enemies. We become more Christlike!

The Bible reveals many instances when godly people prayed for others and asked other people to pray for them.

Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. —Romans 13:1-2

You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. —Matthew 5:43-44

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. —Titus 2:1-4

Related Story from the Bible

When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.

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Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. —1 Kings 13:4-6

Pastoral Challenge

Do you *really* believe that God cares about your situation, or that of a loved one, no matter how difficult it may be? How might you benefit from remembering God's promise to give the Jewish exiles in pagan Babylon hope and a future?

What is involved in "seeking God with all of your heart?" (See Jeremiah 29:11.) Related verses: Proverbs 3:5; 4:23-27; Joshua 22:5; Matthew 22:34-37; Colossians 3:23.

Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

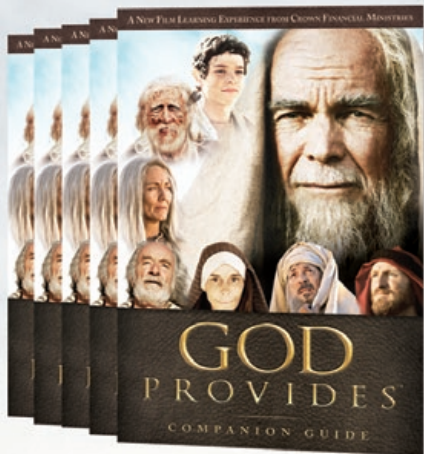
- Corrie and Betsie ten Boom (*The Hiding Place*): Seeing God's hand even in their captivity and forgiving their captors through the Lord's grace.

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]

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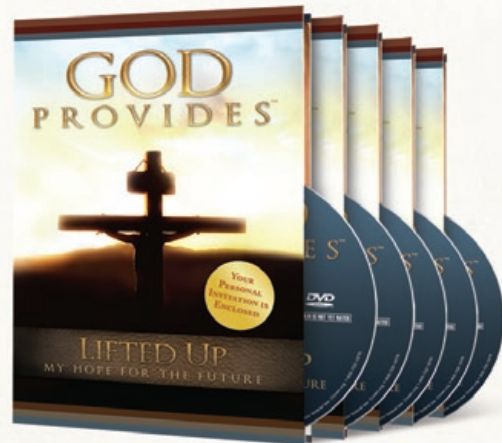


God Provides[™] Companion Guide

When using *God Provides*[™] in a group setting, a Companion Guide is recommended for each person. Purchase additional Companion Guides at your local Christian retailer or contact Crown.

Lifted Up - A Personal Invitation

Share the ultimate act of God's provision for all people—His gift of salvation and new life. This evangelistic packet features the short film *Lifted Up*, along with a special video invitation to Jesus Christ. Contact Crown for bulk purchase options.



Online Companion



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/ Facilitator Tools

Are you facilitating *God Provides*[™] in your family or church? Obtain free additional information and tips to enhance your experience.

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