

The Righteous Branch of David

Jeremiah 23:5–6 | Leader guide and study notes

Purpose: Study the passage in context, explore its Christian connection with Jesus, and invite a thoughtful personal response. These notes support group leaders and individual readers.

A simple session plan

Allow 5 minutes for the introduction and Old Testament reading, 10 minutes for questions 1–4, 15 minutes for questions 5–8, and 10 minutes for reflection and prayer. Ask participants to read the context beforehand if time is short.

Understanding the passage

Jeremiah 23:1–8 contrasts destructive shepherds with God’s own gathering work and his promise of a righteous Davidic king. The setting includes failed leadership, scattering, and the hope of restoration. Judah and Israel are named explicitly; retain these features when discussing the passage’s Christian significance.

The Branch image links new growth with David’s royal house. The king is characterized by wise government, justice, and righteousness. The Christian connection with Jesus rests on the wider biblical portrait of the Davidic Messiah rather than on an explicit quotation of Jeremiah 23:5–6 in the assigned New Testament passages.

The name The LORD our righteousness places God’s righteousness and saving action at the center of the promise. Christians often understand it as consistent with Jesus’ divine identity and role in salvation. Jeremiah 33:16 also applies the name to Jerusalem; therefore the name alone should not be presented as a complete grammatical proof that its bearer is God.

Suggested responses to questions 1 through 4

1. The shepherds destroy, scatter, and neglect the flock. God holds these leaders accountable for their actions. Discuss leadership concretely without requiring participants to identify private experiences of harm.
2. God will gather the remnant, return them to their folds, make them fruitful, and provide shepherds who care for them. The promise includes relief from fear and loss.
3. The LORD raises up a righteous Branch for David. He reigns as king, deals wisely, and executes justice and righteousness. The royal lineage and the quality of his rule both matter.
4. Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely. The king is called The LORD our righteousness. Do not replace these named communities with an undefined audience before examining the original wording.

Connecting the passage with Jesus

Suggested responses to questions 5 through 10

5. Gabriel promises Jesus the throne of David and an endless kingdom. This supports the Christian identification of Jesus with the promised Davidic ruler, though Luke does not explicitly quote Jeremiah here.
6. Jesus calls himself the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Unlike leaders who neglect or scatter, he knows, protects, and gathers his flock. John 10 supplies a thematic comparison.
7. Paul says Christ has become wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The response is boasting in the Lord rather than in human achievement. Keep the answer connected to the wording and context.
8. Christians see Jesus as the Davidic king who embodies righteous leadership and brings salvation. Paul's language about Christ as righteousness illuminates the theme without functioning as an explicit quotation of Jeremiah.
9. Examples include fair decisions, keeping commitments, protecting those in one's care, or admitting a wrong. Reliance on Christ should encourage accountable action rather than excuse neglect.
10. Accept a concise personal takeaway. Suggested prayer themes include gratitude for Christ's care and a request for wisdom to treat others justly.

Questions for deeper discussion

How does the promise of a good king answer the failure of the shepherds? How do Jeremiah 23:6 and Jeremiah 33:16 together inform your understanding of the promised name?

Teaching notes

Distinguish the promise to Judah and Israel from applications to the church. Christians differ over how national restoration and the Messiah's reign unfold. Explain those differences briefly if needed, while keeping attention on the text's clear emphasis on God's faithfulness, justice, and care.

Related collection: This study explores themes in entries 248–254 of the 301-prophecy collection. Distinguish the biblical wording from explanations and applications.

Scripture source: World English Bible, public domain. <https://ebible.org/engwebp/JER23.htm> The passages named in the worksheet provide the primary readings.

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