

The Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 15: The Book of Comfort: Restoration Promised

Jeremiah 30:1–31:26

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, the Book of Comfort sets out the saving heart of God toward His people. The teacher must establish God as the Savior who alone can heal the “incurable” wound of sin (30:12–17), the God whose everlasting love (31:3) is the reason He gathers, restores, and keeps faith with a people who broke covenant with Him. At the center stands the covenant formula, “you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (30:22), which reveals that the goal of all God’s saving work is restored relationship, not merely improved circumstances. The teacher should show how this very promise is taken up in the New Testament as fulfilled in the church (2 Corinthians 6:16–18; Romans 9:25–26), and how Rachel’s weeping (31:15) is heard again at the coming of Christ (Matthew 2:18), binding these chapters to the gospel.

As in the previous lesson, the teacher must guard the restoration promises carefully. The return from exile was a real, historical event, and God genuinely brought His people home. But the deepest fulfillment of this healing, gathering, and rejoicing is the spiritual restoration God accomplishes in Christ for His people, the true and spiritual Israel, the church (Galatians 6:16; Romans 2:28–29; 9:6–8). These chapters are not a blueprint or timetable for a future earthly kingdom of national Israel, a rebuilt temple, or an earthly political reign; the kingdom arrived with Jesus and was established at Pentecost, and Christ reigns now (Daniel 2:44; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13). The teacher must hold out the hope of these chapters in its true, Christ-centered, church-fulfilled meaning, and steer clear of every dispensational reading.

Beyond the doctrine, the lesson aims at the formation of the student. Many believers quietly doubt that their deepest wounds can be healed, or relate to God as if His love must be re-earned each day, or carry grief that feels like it has no future. The teacher’s goal is that students would bring their incurable wounds to the only Healer, rest in the everlasting love of God, and let the God who turns mourning into joy gather and comfort them, so that the promise “you shall be my people, and I will be your God” becomes the settled ground of their lives in Christ.

Question 1

Student Question:

Read 30:1–11. God promises to restore His people’s fortunes and to “save you from far away,” adding, “I am with you to save you” (30:10–11). What does this promise reveal about God as the Savior of His people, and why must any restoration begin with God’s own saving action rather than human effort?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open by marking the shift. After chapters of warning, God tells Jeremiah, “Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you” (30:2), and pours out two chapters of pure comfort. The very prophet of judgment becomes the herald of hope. This shows that judgment was never God’s last word for His people; restoration and salvation were always the goal beyond the discipline.

Notice the language of salvation in 30:10–11: “I will save you from far away... I am with you to save you.” The restoration is not something the exiles will engineer for themselves; it is something God will do. Any true restoration of a fallen people must begin with God’s own saving action, not with human effort or self-improvement. This is the deep grammar of grace.

Teach the balance of verse 11. “I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.” God’s saving love does not cancel His holiness; He disciplines, but in measure, and for the sake of restoration, not destruction. Salvation and holiness meet in the heart of God.

Point forward. The God who is “with you to save you” is most fully known in the Son whose very name means the LORD saves (Matthew 1:21). The salvation foreshadowed here, a people brought home from exile, is fulfilled in Christ, who brings His people home from the exile of sin.

Land it on assurance. To a scattered, fearful people God says, “Do not be dismayed.” The basis is not their strength but His presence and His saving purpose. The same is true for every believer who feels far off and afraid.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God as the Savior who initiates restoration; salvation begins with His action, not ours (30:10–11).
- Judgment as discipline “in just measure,” aimed at restoration, not destruction.
- The meeting of God’s saving love and His holiness.
- The foreshadowing of Christ, in whom the LORD saves His people from sin (Matthew 1:21).
- Assurance grounded in God’s presence and purpose, not human strength.

Discussion Prompts

- Why must any true restoration begin with God’s saving action rather than our effort?
- How do God’s discipline and God’s saving love fit together in this passage?
- Where do you most need to hear “I am with you to save you”?

Question 2

Student Question:

God told a frightened, scattered people, “Do not be dismayed... for I am with you to save you” (30:10–11). Where in your own fear or scattered-feeling life do you most need to hear that God is with you to save you, and what would change if you believed it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question takes the great promise of 30:10–11 and presses it into the student's fear. The exiles felt scattered, distant, dismayed. Many believers carry the same inner geography: a sense of being far from God, fragmented, afraid.

Help students name where they feel "far away." It may be a season of failure, a drifting season of faith, a circumstance that has them anxious and undone. To such a heart God says, "Do not be dismayed... for I am with you to save you."

Distinguish God's nearness from our feelings. The exiles did not feel saved when this word came; they were still in Babylon. But God's presence and saving purpose were already true. Faith rests on God's word, not on the temperature of our emotions.

Move toward something concrete. Ask each person to name one fear or scattered place in their life, and to receive God's word over it: "I am with you to save you." Invite a small act of trust this week that takes God at His word.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The sense of being far off, scattered, and afraid.
- God's presence and saving purpose as the answer to dismay (30:10–11).
- Faith resting on God's word rather than on feelings.
- Taking God at His word in a specific area of fear.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you most feel far off, scattered, or afraid right now?
- What would change if you truly believed God is with you to save you there?
- What small act of trust could you take this week to rest on that promise?

Question 3

Student Question:

Read 30:12–17. God calls the wound "incurable" and then declares, "I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal" (30:12, 17). What does it reveal about God that He both diagnoses the hopelessness of sin honestly and provides the only cure?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verses 12–17 hold one of the most striking pivots in Scripture. God first diagnoses without flinching: "Your hurt is incurable, and your wound is grievous... there is no healing for you" (30:12–13). He refuses to flatter His people about the depth of their sin and its consequences. The wound is beyond every human remedy.

Then, in the same breath, the same God says, “For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the LORD” (30:17). Only God can call a thing incurable and then cure it. This is the gospel pattern: an honest diagnosis no human effort can touch, and a divine Healer who steps in by sheer grace.

Teach what this reveals about God. He is honest enough to name the seriousness of sin, and merciful enough to heal it Himself. A God who minimized our wound could not truly heal it; a God who only diagnosed and walked away would not be good. Here both holiness and mercy are on full display.

Guard against cheap comfort. The healing is real precisely because the wound is named as real. The gospel is not God pretending we are fine; it is God curing what was genuinely incurable, at infinite cost to Himself in Christ (1 Peter 2:24, by His wounds you are healed).

Land it with hope. Whatever wound a person carries, sin, shame, brokenness, the word of this passage stands: the God who calls it incurable is the God who says, “I will heal you.”

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s honest diagnosis of sin as an “incurable” wound (30:12–13).
- God alone as the Healer who cures what no human remedy can touch (30:17).
- Holiness and mercy displayed together in the gospel pattern.
- The fulfillment in Christ, by whose wounds we are healed (1 Peter 2:24).
- The danger of cheap comfort that minimizes the wound instead of healing it.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God name our condition as “incurable” before He heals it?
- What does it tell us about God that He both diagnoses and cures?
- How does this pattern help you understand the gospel of Christ?

Question 4

Student Question:

God names our condition honestly before He heals it (30:12–17). Where are you tempted to minimize or manage a wound or sin in your own life rather than bringing its full seriousness to the only One who can truly heal it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question turns the incurable-wound passage inward. Our instinct with our own wounds and sins is to manage them, minimize them, or hide them, anything but name them honestly before God.

Help students see the cost of minimizing. A wound we will not name, we will not bring for healing. The patient who insists the lump is nothing never seeks the cure. Honesty about the depth of our need is the doorway to grace.

Name the common dodges: calling sin a mistake, blaming circumstances, comparing ourselves favorably to others, staying busy enough to avoid reflection. Each one keeps us from the only Healer.

Move to honesty. Ask each person to name one wound or sin they have been managing rather than bringing fully to God, and to take it, in its real seriousness, to the One who heals the incurable.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temptation to minimize, manage, or hide our wounds and sins.
- Honest confession as the doorway to healing (1 John 1:8–9).
- The common dodges that keep us from the Healer.
- Bringing the full seriousness of our need to God.

Discussion Prompts

- What wound or sin are you tempted to manage rather than bring fully to God?
- How does minimizing a wound keep us from being healed?
- What would it look like to bring that to God in full honesty this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Read 30:18–22. At the heart of the restoration God places the covenant promise, “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (30:22). What does this ancient promise reveal about the goal of all God’s saving work, and how is it ultimately fulfilled in Christ and His church?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

At the center of the restoration God places the covenant formula: “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (30:22). This is the heartbeat of the whole Bible, first sounded to Abraham and Israel, repeated through the prophets, and brought to fullness in Christ. All the gathering, healing, and restoring serve this one end: that God would have a people and the people would have their God.

Teach the goal of salvation. God does not save merely to improve our circumstances; He saves to have us as His own and to be ours. The aim is relationship, belonging, communion. This is why the deepest comfort of these chapters is not a returned homeland but a restored God.

Show the New Testament fulfillment. Paul applies this very covenant promise to the church: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Corinthians 6:16). Hosea’s “you are my people” is fulfilled in the calling of both Jews and Gentiles into Christ (Romans 9:25–26). The promise reaches its goal in the church, the people God has claimed as His own in His Son.

Guard the fulfillment carefully. The teacher should make clear that this is fulfilled in the spiritual people of God, the church, the true and spiritual Israel, not in a future political nation with a rebuilt temple. The kingdom has come; God dwells with His people now by His Spirit (Galatians 6:16; Colossians 1:13).

Land it on belonging. To be God’s people and to have Him as our God is the highest privilege a creature can know. Everything else God gives flows from this, and this is what He is restoring.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The covenant formula “you shall be my people, and I will be your God” as the goal of all God’s saving work (30:22).
- Salvation aimed at restored relationship, not merely improved circumstances.
- The New Testament fulfillment of this promise in the church (2 Corinthians 6:16; Romans 9:25–26).
- Fulfillment in the spiritual people of God, the church, not a future political nation (Galatians 6:16; Colossians 1:13).
- Belonging to God as the highest privilege of the creature.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is restored relationship, not just better circumstances, the goal of God’s saving work?
- How does the New Testament show this promise fulfilled in the church?
- What does it mean to you that God’s aim is to have you as His own?

Question 6

Student Question:

The aim of God’s restoring work is relationship: “you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (30:22). How does it reframe your daily walk to know that God’s goal is not merely to fix your circumstances but to have you as His own?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question presses the covenant promise into daily life. We can know in theory that God wants relationship with us, yet live as though He is mainly a fixer of problems, a means to a more comfortable life.

Help students feel the difference. If God's goal is merely to improve my circumstances, then He matters most when life is hard and recedes when life is smooth. But if God's goal is to have me as His own, then He matters in every season, and the relationship itself is the treasure.

Name the drift. We slide into using God for outcomes, prayer becomes mostly requests, faith becomes mostly transactions. The covenant promise calls us back to communion: He is our God, we are His people.

Move to a concrete reorientation. Ask each person to name one way they have been treating God as a means rather than the end, and one practice, of worship, gratitude, or simple presence, that would help them seek Him for Himself this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The drift from communion with God into using God for outcomes.
- God as the treasure Himself, not merely a means to a better life.
- Relationship with God as the steady ground in every season.
- Reorienting prayer and faith from transaction to communion.

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you been treating God as a means to a better life rather than as your God?
- How does knowing God wants you as His own reframe your daily walk?
- What practice would help you seek God for Himself this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

Read 31:1–14. God declares, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you” (31:3), and promises to gather and satisfy His people. What does the everlasting, faithful love of God teach us about why He saves and restores His people at all?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 31 opens the deepest spring of comfort: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you” (31:3). Here God tells His people the reason behind all the gathering, healing, and restoring. It is not their worth, their performance, or their repair of the relationship. It is His everlasting love.

Teach the nature of this love. It is everlasting, not flickering; it does not begin when we behave and end when we fail. And it is the cause of His faithfulness: because He has loved with an everlasting love, He continues His faithfulness even to a people who broke covenant. Grace flows from love that came first.

Show the gathering and satisfying that flow from this love (31:4–14): God will rebuild, bring back, satisfy the weary soul, turn mourning into joy. Love is not mere sentiment; it acts, it gathers, it provides, it rejoices over its people.

Point to Christ. This everlasting love is the same love that gave the Son: “God so loved the world” (John 3:16), and “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1). The love that pursued exiles pursues us to the cross and beyond.

Land it on assurance. The believer’s standing does not rest on the strength of our love for God but on the everlastingness of His love for us. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s everlasting love as the reason He saves and restores (31:3).
- Love that comes first and produces His continued faithfulness.
- Love that acts: gathering, satisfying, turning mourning into joy (31:4–14).
- The same everlasting love fulfilled in Christ, who loved His own to the end (John 13:1).
- Assurance grounded in His love for us, not our love for Him (1 John 4:19).

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that God’s love is everlasting rather than something we switch on by behaving?
- How is God’s faithfulness rooted in His love that came first?
- How does this everlasting love reach its fullness in Christ?

Question 8

Student Question:

God’s everlasting love is the reason He keeps pursuing His people (31:3). Where have you been relating to God as if His love must be earned or could run out, and how does His everlasting love free you to love and obey Him in return?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question takes the everlasting love of 31:3 and applies it to our chronic temptation to earn. Many believers relate to God as if His love were a wage, paid for good performance and withheld for bad, always at risk of running out.

Help students see the bondage of earned love. It produces either pride, when we think we have done well, or despair, when we know we have not. Neither is rest. The everlasting love of God breaks the cycle: His love is the cause of our standing, not the reward for it.

Be careful and biblical. Resting in God's everlasting love is not a license to presume; Scripture warns that we can fall away through hardened unbelief (Hebrews 3:12–14). But the love that calls us is steadfast, and our security is in abiding in that love, not in achieving it.

Move to freedom. Ask each person where they have been trying to earn what God freely gives, and how resting in His everlasting love would change the way they obey, not to win His love, but because they already have it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The bondage of relating to God's love as something earned.
- Earned love produces pride or despair, never rest.
- Resting in God's steadfast love while continuing faithfully in Him (Hebrews 3:12–14).
- Obedience flowing from love received, not love earned (1 John 4:19).

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you been trying to earn God's love rather than rest in it?
- How does earned love produce either pride or despair?
- How would resting in God's everlasting love change the way you obey Him?

Question 9

Student Question:

Read 31:15–26. Rachel weeps for her children, yet God answers, “Keep your voice from weeping... there is hope for your future,” promising to turn mourning into joy and satisfy the weary soul (31:15–17, 25). Matthew quotes Rachel's weeping at the slaughter in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:18). How does this passage display God's holiness, His mercy that meets His people in their grief, and His covenant faithfulness that turns mourning into joy and points us to the true and deeper restoration God accomplishes in Christ, not a future earthly kingdom for a political nation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest block of the lesson, and it gathers the whole Book of Comfort. The passage holds together deep grief and deep hope. “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children... because they are no more” (31:15). Rachel, the mother of Israel, personifies the nation weeping over its lost children, the exiled and the dead. God does not silence the grief or pretend it away.

Teach how God meets His people in their grief. To weeping Rachel He says, “Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work... there is hope for your future” (31:16–17). God's mercy does not stand at a distance from sorrow; it enters it and

speaks a future into it. He promises to turn mourning into joy and to satisfy the weary soul (31:13, 25). His holiness has disciplined, but His mercy has the last word.

Show the gospel connection that Matthew makes. When Herod slaughtered the infants of Bethlehem around the birth of Christ, Matthew heard Rachel weeping again (Matthew 2:16–18). The weeping of these chapters surrounds the coming of the Christ, and so does the hope, for the child who escaped Herod's sword is the one in whom all this comfort comes true. The deepest healing of every incurable wound, the turning of all mourning into joy, is accomplished in Him.

Now guard the fulfillment with great care, for this is where the doctrinal danger lies. The restoration these chapters promise was partly fulfilled in the real, historical return from exile, but its deepest fulfillment is the spiritual restoration God works in Christ for His people, the true and spiritual Israel, the church (Galatians 6:16; Romans 2:28–29; 9:6–8). These promises are not a blueprint for a future earthly kingdom of national Israel, a rebuilt temple, or a political reign. The kingdom arrived with Jesus and was established at Pentecost; Christ reigns now (Daniel 2:44; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13). The teacher must hold out this hope in its true, Christ-centered meaning and refuse every dispensational reading.

Close with comfort and worship. The God of the Book of Comfort is holy enough to discipline, merciful enough to enter our weeping, and faithful enough to turn our mourning into joy, all of it fulfilled in the Son who wipes away every tear (Revelation 21:3–4). The weeping has a future, because God Himself is its future.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God meeting His people in real grief, not silencing it (31:15–17).
- God's mercy speaking hope and a future into sorrow; mourning turned to joy (31:13, 25).
- Matthew's use of Rachel's weeping at Bethlehem, binding these chapters to the coming of Christ (Matthew 2:16–18).
- The restoration fulfilled most deeply in Christ and His church, the true and spiritual Israel (Galatians 6:16; Romans 9:6–8).
- The danger of dispensational readings of a future earthly kingdom, rebuilt temple, and political reign; the kingdom is present in Christ (Daniel 2:44; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13).
- The consummation in which God wipes away every tear (Revelation 21:3–4).

Discussion Prompts

- How does God meet His weeping people, and what does He say to their grief?
- Why does Matthew hear Rachel's weeping again at the coming of Christ?
- How is the restoration of these chapters fulfilled in Christ and His church rather than a future political kingdom?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole Book of Comfort, from the incurable wound healed, to the covenant promise renewed, to the everlasting love declared, to mourning turned to joy. Name one specific way the Lord Jesus is using these promises of restoration to heal, gather, or comfort you, and to form His likeness in you this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone question moves the student from study to surrender. Look back across the Book of Comfort: the incurable wound healed, the saving presence promised, the covenant relationship renewed, the everlasting love declared, the mourning turned to joy. Each is an invitation to be formed.

Resist letting this stay abstract. Press for one specific way the Lord Jesus is at work: a wound to bring for healing, a fear to surrender to the saving God, an earned-love trap to abandon, a grief to entrust to the God who turns mourning into joy.

Tie it explicitly to Christ. The whole Book of Comfort finds its yes in Him: He heals the incurable by His wounds, He gathers His scattered people into His church, He loves His own to the end, and He will one day wipe away every tear. We are formed by resting in that love, not by striving for it.

Invite each person to name their “one thing” aloud or on paper, and to carry it into the week as a matter of prayer and trust.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Moving from knowledge to formation and trust (James 1:22).
- Christ as the fulfillment of every promise in the Book of Comfort.
- Bringing our wounds and griefs to the God who heals and comforts.
- Spiritual formation as resting in God’s everlasting love, not striving for it.

Discussion Prompts

- Which promise in the Book of Comfort is the Lord pressing on you most?
- What wound or grief will you bring to the Healer and Comforter this week?
- How does resting in God’s everlasting love change the way you face this season?