

Judah Is Led Into Captivity

2 Kings 25:1-21

MEMORY VERSE

2 KINGS 25:21

“...Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A blindfold and a piece of string large enough to gently tie a child’s hands together.

Several small pieces of paper, tape, a pencil or pen, and blindfolds (optional).

ATTENTION GRABBER!

“Sin Can Bind Us”

The nation of Judah got into a lot of trouble because of their sin. This game will help us to understand the seriousness of sin and its consequences.

You will need a blindfold and a piece of string long enough to gently tie a child’s hands together. Using the chairs in your classroom, make a large circle in the middle of your classroom. The chairs should be facing out. Have enough chairs for every child in your class. Have all of the children sit down in the chairs. Go around the circle and whisper a number into the ear of each child. Choose and announce one number to be “Judah.” Place a blindfold on “Judah’s” eyes and tie their hands. This represents the bondage that Judah faced from the Babylonian king.

After “Judah” is bound, call out another number to be the “enemy”. They will not have any blindfolds or ties to restrict them. When you say, “go” have the “enemy” chase “Judah” once around the circle of chairs. The object is for the enemy to catch and tag Judah. Judah must get around the circle and back into their seat before they are tagged. If Judah is caught, remove the string and blindfold and have them stand inside of the circle. Remove their chair and close the open space. Next, pick two new players. Keep playing until the circle is too filled to play any longer. Obviously Judah will be easily caught. Use this game as an illustration that if we give our lives over to sin, it will blind us, bind us, and make it easy to be caught by the enemy! **When we disobey God, there will be consequences.**

LESSON TIME!

Let’s reflect back on the history of Israel. After the death of King Solomon, Israel was divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The Northern Kingdom never had a good king that followed the Lord. Remember, their sin against God led to their captivity by the Assyrians. The Southern Kingdom (Judah) is where Jerusalem was located, where King David reigned, and where King Solomon built the beautiful temple to honor God. Though the Southern Kingdom (Judah) had a few good kings, most refused to obey and follow the Lord.

Under the leadership of the wicked kings, Judah had forsaken the worship of the one true God. The people worshiped idols and practiced the same wickedness as the nations that surrounded them. In time, the house of Lord fell into disrepair and the Book of the Law—God’s Word—was lost. The people had forgotten God!

God in His mercy gave Judah a good king, Josiah. He was not only determined to follow the Lord with his whole heart, he was determined to restore all of Judah to the worship of the true God.

Under the reign of Josiah, the temple was restored and the priceless forgotten treasure—the Book of the Law—was recovered. The Law revealed God’s righteous requirements and revealed the sin of the people. Josiah sought to lead the nation in genuine repentance; and the Passover, not observed for many decades, was celebrated with much joy. But sadly, the changes that appeared outwardly did not take place inwardly in the hearts of the people of Judah; and after the death of King Josiah, the nation would face the consequences of their sins. **When we disobey God, there will be consequences.**

After the death of Josiah (609 BC), Judah became a servant to Egypt. Years later, the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Judah. Ten thousand captives were carried away to Babylon. A relative of King Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah, was set upon the throne to rule those remaining in Judah. Judah was promised peace if they would promise not to rebel. Eleven years later, Zedekiah broke this promise and led Judah in rebellion. The Babylonians once more invaded Jerusalem.

2 KINGS 25:1-7

Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around.

So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain.

But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him.

So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him.

Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

A terrible siege came in the ninth year of King Zedekiah's reign. The tenth day of the tenth month is referring to the Jewish calendar and scholars believe this siege began in January of 587 BC. The Bible says it lasted 19 months.

The enemy could not just come walking in. Jerusalem had a wall built around it. The Babylonians camped around the city. Since no one could leave the city, the people could not work the land; food supplies quickly ran out. In addition to this problem, the Babylonian army began to alter the flow of the river causing problems with the city's water supply. With shortage of food and water, there was no strength left in Israel's army to fight. The army as well as the people were worn down and worn out.

Though the city was surrounded, the king and his household decided to run for it. The king's guard broke a hole in the city wall, and they made a break for Jericho. "A household" could have been a couple of hundred people: the wives, the children, the slaves, the cooks, and the king's personal guard. Zedekiah and his family were caught by the Babylonian army. The Babylonian army showed no mercy. The children of the enemy's leaders were almost always put to death in those days (especially sons) so that they would not grow up and avenge the death of their father. Years earlier, Ezekiel 12:10-13, the Lord had given a prophecy concerning King Zedekiah's fate. King Zedekiah's sons were put to death and his own eyes are put out. He was bound and taken to Babylon. How tragic! **When we disobey God, there will be consequences.**

"Sin Will Catch Up To Us!"

The object of this game is to try to get rid of the sin that is stuck on you by placing it on others while at the same time trying not to get anymore stuck on you.

You will need several small pieces of paper (one for each child), tape, a pen or pencil and blindfolds (optional). On the small pieces of paper have each person write out the word "sin." Give everyone a piece of tape to put on the back of the piece of paper. Tape the small paper onto each child.

Depending on your class size you can make either one larger group or two smaller groups. Next turn off the lights and/or blindfold the children so no one can see. When you say, "go" have the children try to get rid of the sin on them while not having anymore attached to them. As the children bump around each other, they should stick the paper on their backs, arms or legs.

After a few moments, call “stop.” Turn the lights back on and see where all of the sin is. Reinforce to the children that all of us do sin and our sin will affect others. We can try to remove our own sin, but it will only return. Only Jesus can remove our sin for good and make us acceptable to the Father.

2 KINGS 25:8-12

And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire.

And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude.

But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

A few weeks after King Zedekiah and his household were executed and/or taken away, the commander of King Nebuchadnezzar's imperial guard came to Jerusalem. The king had decided to show no more mercy for the once beautiful city. His orders were to destroy. He set the temple and all the important buildings on fire. These were not wooden structures. Everything was made of stone. The fires were hot, intense, and burned for a very long time.

The majority of the population was carried away to Babylon as prisoners. The commander allowed the poorest of the farmers to stay and work the land. They presented no threat of rebellion anymore; for they had no king and were weak.

2 KINGS 25:13-17

The bronze pillars that were in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon.

They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered.

The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away.

The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure.

The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the capital on it was of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.

The damage was done. The commander looked for what was still remaining in the once beautiful temple that could be useful to his king. He knew the gold and silver of the temple were gone already, but the bronze might be used to beautify his king's city in various ways.

1 Kings 7 gives us more information on the pillars, the movable stands, and the sea. The beautifully wrought pillars were 27 feet high and 18 feet around. And the decorations on the top added another 4 1/2 feet—making it the size of a two-story house. They were decorated with pomegranates and bronze chains interwoven together. The two pillars even had names. They were an important part of the structure of the Temple. The sea was fifteen feet across and 45 feet around. It was placed on a stand that was 12 bulls made of bronze. Josephus, the historian, says the sea was used for washing before prayer. What a great loss for the once beautiful city that had enjoyed worshiping God! **When we disobey God, there will be consequences.**

2 KINGS 25:18-21

And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers.

He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city.

So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

Even the priests and the doorkeepers of the temple were executed. It is possible that these were among the men who would not change their ways and serve the Lord wholly, though warned by the prophets of God.

“Judah was carried away captive from its own land.” How tragic is the end of a nation that forsakes the true and living God! The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had been warning the nation of Israel to change her ways for over 50 years. God is slow to carry out judgment. He is merciful and patient toward His people. Yet, if His people continue in rebellion and disobedience, His judgment will surely come. We are again reminded of an important truth: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7). **When we disobey God, there will be consequences.**

How foolish was Judah. Jeremiah, a faithful prophet who began his ministry during the reign of Josiah, tearfully witnessed the tragedies that befell Jerusalem. He reflected on the strained relationship between God and Israel: Like a faithless wife who breaks her marriage vows, Israel had forsaken God (Jeremiah 3:20). How foolish we would be if we choose to forsake God and walk in our own ways. In Proverbs 9:10 we read, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom....”

In the New Testament, we are told that the things that happened in the Old Testament are written for instruction. The fate of Judah is a clear warning: Though God is longsuffering and slow to judge, judgment will indeed come to those who forsake God and follow their own ways. If we serve sin, destruction will follow. However, if we serve the Lord with our whole hearts, His peace and blessing will surround our lives.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to serve the Lord with all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength and to never turn away from Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.