

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).

A sheet of poster board for each child (approx. 11”x 17”), scissors and markers or crayons.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

“Sin Can Bind Us”

We will learn in our lesson today that the nation of Judah got into a lot of trouble because of their sin. They became under the bondage of their enemy and were carried away. 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 won’t 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! This is what we will be learning in our lesson today. **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

LESSON TIME!

Today’s story is about Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, their rebellion towards God and the consequences that happened because of their disobedience. When we sin, the results of that sin will often lead to bad things happening in our lives. That is the greatest lesson that we can learn from all of Judah’s mistakes. We will see the bad things that happened to them because of their sin and learn that we need to stay close to the Lord and never leave His presence and protection over our lives. **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

Let’s take just a few moments to review some things about Israel’s history. After King Solomon died the kingdom divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The Northern Kingdom NEVER had a good king that followed the Lord. We learned a few weeks ago that their sin against God led to their captivity by the Assyrians.

Judah had a few good kings, but most of them refused to obey God or follow Him. The story today is about Judah and what has happened because they chose to serve false gods and idols instead of worshiping the Lord. The southern kingdom (Judah) is where Jerusalem was located. Judah is where King David reigned and King Solomon built the beautiful temple to honor God and the beautiful city Jerusalem.

Oh, how the people forgot God and His ways. How many times they worshipped other gods; how many times they didn't keep His Sabbath day holy; how many times they took advantage of His great love and mercy to do their own thing. Today's story is one of the lessons the Lord desires us to learn through what His people Judah had to suffer. May our hearts always remain close to the Lord so that we never become captive by this world, sin or our enemy, the devil. **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

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.

During the reign of King Zedekiah (he was the 19th king from King Solomon) the Bible says he rebelled against the king of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar was in the process of taking over the world. The Babylonians were one of the world's largest and wealthiest kingdoms ever. By the time of our Bible study today King Nebuchadnezzar had already conquered Judah. It was pretty easy for him to do. He took the king captive and sent him to Babylon. He placed one of his relatives in power as king of Judah (Zedekiah) and told him that he would leave them alone as long as they did what he told them to do.

Eleven years later, Zedekiah breaks his promise to King Nebuchadnezzar and begins to rebel against him. Nebuchadnezzar becomes very angry at Zedekiah and comes to conquer Judah once again. This time, in his estimation, he wasn't going to be as nice. He was going to teach rebellious Zedekiah and Judah a lesson.

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been warning the nation of Israel to change her ways for over 50 years. They knew trouble was on its way if the people did not change their practices. But hardly anyone listened to the prophets. It was like their preaching was falling on deaf ears. The people held on to their sin and refused to repent and turn to God. So 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.

Jerusalem had a wall built around it. The enemy could not just come walking in. They had to camp around the city. And there they stayed. The people could not work the land; so food supplies ran out (this is what a siege is). This is where we find King Zedekiah in our story today. The Babylonian army began to alter the flow of the river that gave the city water, thereby causing problems with their water supply. There was no strength left in Israel's army to fight. The army as well as the people were worn down and worn out.

The king and his household decided to run for it. Even though the enemy had the city surrounded, 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 are caught by the Babylonian army. Horrible things happen in wartime and there was no mercy from the Babylonian army. 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. The Lord in Ezekiel 12:10-13 pronounced King Zedekiah's fate. All of King Zedekiah's sons are put to death and his own eyes are put out. Then he is bound and taken to Babylon. What a terrible thing to happen! **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

The saddest thing of all was that none of this had to happen. God would have come to His people's aid any time if they just would have turned from their evil ways and asked for His help. They had become too attached to this world, its idols and pleasures to turn back to God. Even when we forsake the Lord and turn our back on Him, He still loves us very much, but **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

Like the prodigal son, the father loved him very much. But the son wanted his money and wasted it all. Sin finally led him to ruin. He was living and eating with pigs. He never had to end up in that place. He only did because he turned his back on his father. We will never have to experience all of the bad things that are produced by sin if we never leave the Father's side. If only King Zedekiah turned to the Lord and repented, God might have saved him from the Babylonians. **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

“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 the king 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. We

read the commander 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 were made prisoners, made to leave everything behind and taken to Babylon. The commander allowed the poorest of the farmers to stay and work the land. He knew they presented no threat of rebellion anymore; they had no king and they were weak and afraid. They just wanted to feed their families, and be left alone.

All of this destruction was brought on because of the people's sin. Sin will always bring destruction to our lives. Satan, our enemy is called a "destroyer" in the Bible. His purpose is to destroy us and our witness for the Lord. He will make sin look exciting and good, but if we serve sin we will find that it will only destroy our lives. Sin finally destroyed this whole nation, it can certainly destroy us. It is not something that we want to play with at all! **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

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 thought about the once beautiful temple and looked for what might 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 is where we learn about 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. That's like 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. And what about the sea? It 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. This was a great loss for a once beautiful city that enjoyed worshiping God. **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

We see in these verses that the very place that was dedicated to the worship of God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth was now in complete ruins. It was neglected by the people and forsaken. God had left this temple long ago because His people had abandoned Him. But even in the midst of this there is hope. God loves His people and was even at this time just waiting for them to come back to Him.

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.

We now see more tragedy and executions by the king of Babylon. These were men who should have been loyal in their service to the temple and the Lord. They may have been some of the very men who would not change their ways when warned by the prophets of God that His judgment would not be kept waiting forever. These were men who loved their power and reputations more than they loved God and His ways. **There are consequences when we disobey God.**

Some of God's stories are sad ones to hear. It should always be sad for God's people to hear about disobedience and what happens as a result. But God is slow to carry out His judgment. He has a lot of patience with His people. But there does come a day that if we choose to live without the knowledge of God that we will be judged for that. It is good to remember that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" Proverbs 9:10.

In the New Testament we are told that all of the things that happened in the Old Testament are written for our examples. So we can learn about God and our relationship with Him. We can learn from this example of Judah that it will never be a good thing if we forsake the Lord and follow our own ways. If we serve sin then destruction will follow. But if we serve the Lord with all of our hearts then the peace of the Lord and His blessing will always be ours.

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 to do so.