

Bible Stories for Adults

Judah is Taken Into Captivity

2 Kings 24-25; Ezekiel; Jeremiah 38-44

Opening

Gathering: How do the sins of one person create problems for others?

Today's Focus: After years of calling His people back to Him, the Jews continued to reject God so He removed them from the Promised Land and sent them to Babylon for 70 years of soul-searching.

Key Verses: *The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against His command. Listen, all you peoples; look upon my suffering. My young men and maidens have gone into exile.* Lamentations 1:18

I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Ezekiel 33:11

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Good King Josiah (2 Kings 22-23)

How faithful of a king was Josiah?

2 Kings 23:25 = Looked to God in obedience more than other kings of Judah

But wasn't Hezekiah the most faithful of all of Judah's kings?

2 Kings 18:5 = Yes, and Josiah was the most obedient to God's Law

What happened to Josiah? = Went to fight Egyptians as they were on their way to fight the Babylonians

2 Kings 23:29 = Died in battle against Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo

Why wasn't God with Josiah when he fought against Egypt? = Judah uninvolved

2 Chronicles 35:21-22 = God had sent Egypt to join Assyria against Babylon

Jehoahaz / Shallum (2 Kings 23:31-35)

Who succeeded Josiah and what happened to him?

2 Kings 23:31a, 32-33 = Josiah's son, Jehoahaz - Captured & exiled to Egypt by Neco

What did God prophecy through Jeremiah about Jehoahaz? = *Jehoahaz – Yahweh siezes*

Jeremiah 22:11-12 = *He will never return* – Shallum - personal name, Jehoahaz - throne name

Jehoiakim / Eliakim (2 Kings 23:36-24:7)

Who succeeded Jehoahaz and how did he secure his reign? = *Jehoiakim – Yahweh has established*

2 Kings 23:34-35 = Josiah's son, Eliakim (renamed Jehoiakim) taxed land & paid tribute

How faithful was Jehoiakim and what happened to his alliance with Egypt?

2 Kings 23:37-24:1 = Evil; Egypt fell to Babylon & Judah was vassal of Babylon 3 yrs

How did Babylon respond when Jehoiakim revolted?

2 Chronicles 36:6-7 = Nebuchadnezzar captured Jehoiakim & temple items, took to Babylon

What did God prophecy through Jeremiah about Jehoiakim?

Jeremiah 22:18-19 (18-23) = No one would mourn for him, he'd have the burial of a donkey

Bible Stories for Adults

Judah is Taken Into Captivity

Page 2

Jehoiachin / ? (2 Kings 24:8-16)

Who succeeded Jehoiakim and how faithful was his reign? = *Jehoiachin – Yahweh establishes*
2 Chronicles 36:9 = Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin; evil like his father

Why was Jehoiachin's reign so short?

2 Chronicles 36:10 = Surrendered when besieged by Nebuchadnezzar

What did God prophecy through Jeremiah about Jehoiachin?

Jeremiah 22:26-27, 30 (24-30) = *Will never come back*; no offspring would sit on Judah throne

What happened to Jehoiachin later in Babylon? = Only 18 when taken to Babylon

2 Kings 25:27-29 = Given a place of honor in Babylonian household – No reason given

Zedekiah / Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17-20)

Who succeeded Jehoiachin and how faithful was his reign? = *Zedekiah – Righteousness of Yahweh*
2 Kings 24:17, 19 = Josiah's son, Mattaniah (renamed Zedekiah by N), Evil as brother

What were Zedekiah's biggest mistakes? = Led others away from God

2 Chronicles 36:12-14 = Rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar & God, Oath was in God's name

God's Marriage (Jeremiah 3)

How did God explain Israel's actions to Jeremiah?

Jeremiah 3:6-7 = Unfaithful wife, commit adultery everywhere, God hoped she would return

What did God do in response to Israel's adultery and did this affect Judah?

Jeremiah 3:8 (8-11) = He divorced Israel (Assyrian exile), Judah didn't return

Should Israel and Judah expect to be welcomed back by God if they returned?

Jeremiah 3:1 = No, This love is inconceivable (Isaiah 62:5 = Loving husband)

Did God follow this rationale?

Jeremiah 3:12-13 (12-25) = No, He would take them back if they repented

God's Judgement of Israel (Jeremiah 25)

How did God try to get His people to return to Him?

Jeremiah 25:4-7 = Sent prophets *again and again* to get people to return, didn't listen

Why didn't God's people find it necessary to return to God?

Micah 3:11b = *Isn't the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us*

What did God decide to do as a result of Israel's continued faithlessness?

Jeremiah 25:8-11 = *Summon my servant Nebuchadnezzar, 70 years exile*

How would the 70 years of captivity be ended?

Jeremiah 25:12 = Babylon would be destroyed

The First Deportation (2 Kings 24)

How did God begin to bring about this destruction?

2 Kings 24:10-12 = Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

What did Nebuchadnezzar take back to Babylon with the first exile?

2 Kings 24:13-16 = Anything & anybody of value were deported to Babylon

Bible Stories for Adults

Judah is Taken Into Captivity

Page 3

The Response (*Lamentations*)

How did the Jews respond to this?

Lamentations 1:1-2, 6 = They were devastated

What prophet was taken into exile with Jehoiachin?

Ezekiel 1:2-3 = Ezekiel began prophesying while in exile in Babylon (5 yrs after exile)

Why was Ezekiel compelled to warn the Jews even though they were already receiving His punishment?

Ezekiel 33:7-9 = Ezekiel responsible if the Jews stayed unfaithful because he didn't warn them

God is Punishing Us for the Sins of Our Fathers (*Ezekiel 18*)

What did the exiles blame as the cause of their troubles?

Lamentations 5:7 = *Our fathers sinned and we bear their punishment*

Where did the Jews get this idea? = Exodus 20:5 - *... of those who hate Me*

Exodus 34:7b = God warned that He would punish children to the 4th generation

Note: Households commonly had 3-4 generations living together

How did Jesus explain part of the meaning behind this warning? = Like evil father, like evil son

Matthew 23:29-36 = Pharisees condemned forefathers for killing prophets, they were the same

How did Ezekiel explain that it was wrong for the Jews to blame their fathers for their problems?

Ezekiel 18:2-4, 20 (Jeremiah 31:29-30) = Quote proverb no more. Father & son don't share guilt.

But weren't they being punished for the continued unfaithfulness of past generations?

Ezekiel 18:21-24 (21-32) = God judges the faithfulness of the individual, not his ancestors

Our Guilt is Too Great (*Ezekiel 33*)

Did the Jews recognize that the exile was the result of their continued unfaithfulness?

Lamentations 1:8-9 = Yes, the pain of guilt was very heavy

How did God tell Ezekiel to respond to this?

Ezekiel 33:10-11 = God has no pleasure destroying wicked, turn from evil & live

What was he to say when the Jews said that God wouldn't be fair and would punish even if they returned?

Ezekiel 33:17-20 (12-20) = Righteous turned evil dies, wicked turned righteous lives

God has Abandoned His People Israel. We Have No Hope. (*Ezekiel 37*)

How did the Jews feel about being taken from the Promised Land to a foreign land?

Lamentations 3:1-3, 7-11, 18 (1-18) = God has beaten and abandoned us. Our hope is gone.

What object lesson does God give Ezekiel to respond to this hopelessness?

Ezekiel 37:1-4, 10 (1-10) = Ezekiel prophesies to "hopeless" dry bones & they come to life

What did 'dem bones, 'dem bones, 'dem dry bones have to do with the Jews' situation?

Ezekiel 37:11-14 = I will raise you with my Spirit & return you to your land

Zedekiah Rebels (*2 Kings 25:1-7*)

What did Nebuchadnezzar do when Zedekiah rebelled?

2 Kings 25:1-3 = Besieged Jerusalem 1.5 yrs, Caused severe famine

How bad did the famine become? = Prophesied in Jeremiah 19:9

Lamentations 4:10 = Began eating children

What happened when Zedekiah tried to escape?

2 Kings 25:4-7 = Caught, sons killed, blinded, taken to Babylon

Bible Stories for Adults

Judah is Taken Into Captivity

Page 4

The Second Deportation (*2 Kings 25*)

What did Nebuchadnezzar take back to Babylon with the second exile?

2 Chronicles 36:17-20 = Everything & everyone that was left, Jerusalem destroyed

How did those of the first exile hear of the final destruction & exile?

Ezekiel 33:21 = A man who had escaped brought word to Ezekiel

What happened to anyone who escaped the exile and stayed in Judah?

Ezekiel 33:27-29 = Killed by sword, animals or plague

Did Babylon repopulate the land of Judah with other captives like Assyria did with Israel?

2 Chronicles 36:21 = No, it stayed vacant and the land enjoyed 70 yrs of Sabbath rests

Who did Nebuchadnezzar appoint to govern this conquered land?

2 Kings 25:22 = Gedaliah – His father, Ahikam, had worked with Josiah to enact reforms (2K 22)

Jeremiah's Destiny (*Jeremiah 40*)

How was Jeremiah allowed to remain in Judah instead of going to Babylon?

Jeremiah 40:1-6 = Nebuzaradan, commander of guard, released him to Gedaliah

Note: Nebuzaradan was following instructions from King Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 39:11-14)

What happened to Jews who had fled to nearby countries before the exile?

Jeremiah 40:11-12 = They returned to Judah to farm under Gedaliah

What happened to Gedaliah?

Jeremiah 40:13-14; 41:2-3 = He was killed by Ammonites (Ishmael)

Stay or Run? (*Jeremiah 41-44*)

How did the few left handle the assassination of Babylon's appointed ruler?

Jeremiah 42:1-3 = They had Jeremiah ask God what they should do

What answer did Jeremiah return with?

Jeremiah 42:10-11, 13-14, 16 (4-22) = Stay here & I'll build you, Leave & die

What did the Jews do with God's instructions?

Jeremiah 43:2-3, 5, 7 (1-7) = They disobeyed & fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah & Baruch

How would God punish this disobedience?

Jeremiah 44:13-14 = God would kill all who went to Egypt

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I recently blamed someone else for causing problems that were really my fault?
(*1 Kings 18:16-18; Ezekiel 18; Luke 6:41-42; Romans 2:1-11*)
2. When have I felt that God was unfair to me?
(*Job 19:5-21; Proverbs 16:2; Ezekiel 18:25; Romans 9:14-21; Colossians 3:25*)
3. When have I felt the burden of guilt for sins I committed?
(*Genesis 42:21-22; 1 Samuel 24:5-7; Job 9:29; Psalm 38:1-4; Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 1:18-32*)
4. How have I felt God's forgiveness when I repented from sins against Him?
(*Ezekiel 33:10-16; 2 Samuel 19:19-20; Psalm 32:1-5; Isaiah 1:18-20; Luke 7:36-50*)
5. How have I found hope in times when I have felt abandoned?
(*Ezekiel 37; Romans 15:13; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 6:13-20*)