



THE PROPHETS

Date: 9.15.24 | Title: The Southern Kingdom Falls | Scripture: 2 Chron. 34-36 & 2 Kings 25

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God is a righteous judge.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

Jesus gave His life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” 1 Peter 3:9



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BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The Northern Kingdom, Israel, was conquered in 722 BC by the Assyrians and to this day those captives are referred to as “the 10 lost tribes of Israel”. After captivity, these Israelites completely intermixed with other nations and ceased to exist as a nation of their own. They were wiped off the map because of God’s judgment of their sin. In the NT, this intermixed group is known as “the Samaritans”. Samaritans were greatly disliked by the Jews (those from the Southern tribe of Judah).

Like Israel, Judah also disobeyed God, but the individual kings who ruled each kingdom made the difference in their fate. Since Judah had a handful of kings who honored God, they maintained their freedom as a nation longer than their northern counterpart. Due to their independence from God, about 150 years after the Assyrians conquered Israel, Judah was captured by a foreign kingdom, Babylon- the most powerful empire in the Middle East. Babylon invaded Judah and then destroyed the capitol, Jerusalem, in 586 BC.

Babylonia approached Jerusalem twice. In 713 BC, the Assyrian king threatened Jerusalem but was paid off with a tribute. The second time, in 701 BC the chief of staff was sent to the gates of Jerusalem with an intimidating letter promising destruction. Assyrian troops surrounded the city, preparing to lay siege; meanwhile, King Hezekiah spread out the letter before the Lord and prayed for God to intervene.

Because Hezekiah humbled himself before God, God took care of Assyria and became the strong deliverer for Israel, sending a single angel to wipe out 185,000 Assyrian troops (2 Kings 19:35). Assyria’s army was destroyed, which left it open to being conquered by a new world power, Babylon. A century and a half passed after God spared Judah in Hezekiah’s time, with various successor kings taking Judah’s throne. From kings Abijah to Zedekiah: most were poor leaders, disobedient to God, engaged in idol worship that lowered the spiritual standards of the entire nation. The few good kings stood out like shining stars against a very black night, but even the good they did wasn’t enough to prevent Judah from plunging into judgement and captivity. Only one of them, Josiah (Hezekiah’s great-grandson), did right by God.

Josiah was one of the last good kings of Judah (2 Chronicles 34:1-35:19). Josiah’s reign was a short-lived interval. The nation, which had begun with so much promise under David, was now in a tragic spiritual decline which would culminate in its fall to Babylon. His children who succeeded him turned to evil and the nation went into exile. Egypt was contesting control of the Middle East with Assyria and Babylon, all of which caused trouble for God’s people. Assyria had conquered Israel almost 150 years earlier, and now Egypt was threatening from the south and Babylon from the north and east.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

After Josiah's death, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim both led Judah astray (2 Chronicles 36:1-16). Beginning in 604 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, made the first of three successive attacks against Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:17-21). In the first attack, he took captive a bunch of choice young men, including Daniel, who would go on to become God's man in Babylon. Jehoahaz was deposed by the Egyptians after three months as king. Jehoakim kept the throne for 11 years but ignored the prophet's warning and got himself carried off to Babylon in chains. The next king of Judah was Jehoiachin and he was evil too. Jehoiachin only reigned for three months and ten days, and for his evil he suffered the exact same fate as his father. Nebuchadnezzar removed Jehoiachin from power and installed his uncle, Zedekiah, to be king in his place, all the while trying to control everything they did in Jerusalem. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar then ordered his army to besiege Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and removed everything valuable from the temple and took everyone but the poorest people from Jerusalem to Babylon.

He ignored the warnings God sent by the prophet Jeremiah and decided he could take a stand against Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, which, as you can imagine, did not go well. Zedekiah's rebellion led to Nebuchadnezzar's third siege attempt on Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1-21). After two previous assaults from Babylon in 605 BC and 597 BC, the final year of destruction was 586 BC. God had continued to send prophets and warnings, giving His people every chance to get it together and turn around back to Him, but they just weren't having it (2 Chronicles 36:15-16). Finally, it was too late. God's judgment came in the form of the merciless king of Babylon, who broke down Jerusalem's walls, killed Judah's young men, plundered the treasures of the king and the temple, and then burned the temple, the palace, and the houses of the rich.

They surrounded the city for 1.5 years until it was in a state of crisis with no food. Finally, during the third attack in 586 BC, the Babylonian army broke through the walls of Jerusalem and Judah's army scattered in fear. Zedekiah's soldiers fled at night by way of the gate between two walls beside the king's garden. Nebuchadnezzar's army realized what had happened and set out in pursuit of the fleeing soldiers. They overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him. In the very place where Israel had its first victory in conquering the land, it suffered its final defeat before exile. The Babylonian army ransacked the city, destroyed the temple Solomon built and burned the royal palace David built. They destroyed all the important buildings in the city and tore down the walls of Jerusalem. They carried away all of the people of Jerusalem to Babylon, except the poorest of the poor. "For because of the anger of the Lord this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out of His presence." (2 Kings 24:20). Despite the clear hand of God's judgement upon them, none of the kings after Josiah turned back to God.



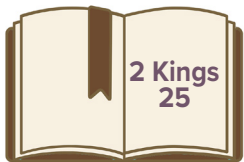
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BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The rationale for the captivity (in addition to the failure of the nation and the evil kings to seek the Lord while seeking other gods and neglecting the temple) was drawn from the prophet Jeremiah. Since the nation had not obeyed the law of giving the land its sabbath rests (Lev. 26:34-35, 43) the nation would be held in captivity until all the missed sabbath years had been made. God forced the people to honor His commandment to give the land a rest, and so they did, for seventy years, while they were enslaved in Babylon. Eventually the kingdom of Persia overthrew Babylon, and God moved Persia to let His people return to their land. The warnings of the prophet Jeremiah had come true. God disciplined His people because of their sin and their unwillingness to repent. God's justice against sin is meant to turn our hearts back to Him. Unfortunately, the kings of Judah ignored God's words. Thankfully, we have a better King who always follows the Word of God and does what is right. Jesus is the better King who conquered sin and death so that we could be forgiven and live with Him forever.

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LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



TELL
THE
STORY



Tell the story: Use the Background Info for Leaders, the summary below or The Message Bible summary of scripture to help tell today's story.

God wants the people He made in His image to live with Him forever, but God cannot tolerate sin. God brings the good news of salvation for those who trust in Him. In today's story, Judah has turned away from God. This story takes us all the way back to the years 609-587 BC when the last four kings of Judah reigned. Let's learn how God disciplines those He loves so that they may turn back to Him and repent.

The last four kings of Judah came from King Josiah's family. His three sons—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah—and his grandson Jehoiachin each ruled as the king of Judah for a short time.

Jehoahaz was not king for long. He did what was evil, and the king of Egypt came and made Jehoahaz a prisoner. The king stole silver and gold from Jehoahaz. Then he put Jehoahaz's brother Jehoiakim on the throne. The king of Egypt took Jehoahaz to Egypt.

When Jehoiakim was king of Judah, he too did what was evil. The king of Babylon attacked Jehoiakim, made him a prisoner, and took him to Babylon. The king of Babylon stole some of the things from the Lord's temple and put them in his own temple. When Jehoiakim was taken away, his son Jehoiachin became king of Judah.

Jehoiachin was king of Judah for just three months. He too did what was evil. The king of Babylon sent for Jehoiachin and brought him to Babylon. The king of Babylon made Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah king of Judah.

Like his brothers, Zedekiah did what was evil. He led the people of Judah to do evil things too. The prophet Jeremiah warned Zedekiah that God would punish him, but Zedekiah did not listen.

God was angry with the people of Judah. They sinned and did not obey God, but God loved His people. He wanted them to turn back to Him. God sent prophets to warn the people, but the people did not listen.

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

Read directly from Scripture, use the message, or the summary provided in the lesson

Re-Tell
The Bible
Story



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Finally, it was time to judge the people of Judah for their sin. God allowed the king of Babylon and his army to attack Judah. Many of the people died. The king of Babylon took everything out of the Lord's temple and carried it back to Babylon. Then the king and his army burned the temple. They tore down the wall around the city and burned the palaces. Anything they did not take with them was destroyed.

All of the people who were still alive were taken back to Babylon. The king forced them to be slaves. Everything the prophet Jeremiah had warned about happened, just like God said it would.

The last four kings of Judah- "did what was evil". Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah all chose to turn away from the Lord. God will not let sin go unpunished. God's love and justice and goodness leads Him to act against sin.

God was right to punish His people for their sin, but He kept His promise to provide a king through David's family. Ultimately, God punished our sin through His Son, Jesus, and made Him our King forever.


Re-tell the Bible Story: Have students re-tell the story as best they can.

Attributes of God: Determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

Share the GOSPEL:

God speaks to us through His Word. God warns us of our sin and our need of repentance. The Bible teaches us that God has promised to provide salvation and judge sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved because Jesus took the punishment we deserve.

Exile is not the final word in the book of Chronicles. The author wraps up the book with the decree of Cyrus, in fulfillment of the promise made through Jeremiah, that those in Babylon may return to Jerusalem and build a house for the Lord (36:22-23). The Lord was not finished with Israel or the temple. His covenant promises were still trustworthy. There was a future for the people of Israel despite their persistent unfaithfulness.



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“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture. Use the Bible Study Bookmark Questions as well as these questions to help students understand the text:

1. Which kingdom was captured first?
2. Who was the last “good” king? Describe his reign.
3. Describe the reigns of Josiah’s sons.
4. Which nation captured Judah?
5. Who was the king of Babylonia who captured Judah?
6. What city was the capitol of Judah?
7. What “famous” major prophet was carried into exile?
8. Describe the attack on Jerusalem.
9. Describe some of the destruction that took place in Jerusalem.
10. How long would captivity last?
11. What hope do we see in the last words of 2 Chronicles?
12. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
13. What does this story teach me about myself?
14. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
15. Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
16. How does this story help me live on mission better?

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.



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PRAYER PROMPTS

Lord, You are good, gracious, patient and loving. Help us to know that you care for us and help us live according to Your Word. Amen.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the students in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible:

- Torah: Genesis-Deuteronomy
- History: Joshua-Esther
- Poetry: Job-Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets: Isaiah-Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi
- Gospels: Matthew-John
- Paul's Letters: Romans-Philemon
- General Letters: Hebrews-Revelation

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

For the months of August, September and October we will be collecting money for the Connie Maxwell Children's Home. Please visit their website for pictures and descriptions of some of the services they offer that you can share with your group. A generous donor will match all of our donations. Encourage your class to collect money and donate it in the giving funnel in the upstairs lobby. Students can donate with their families as they arrive, or you can go together as a class on the way back to the Worship Center at the end of SS.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?