

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 44

Judah Captured



Judah Captured

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to demonstrate the importance of learning from past sins through the story of Judah's captivity.

Key Verses

2 Kings 24:17-25:30—Main Teaching Passage
Deuteronomy 28
James 1:22-25

Memory Verse - Lamentations 3:22 (July Memory Verse)

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.

Hook

Have the class think of a time when they made a mistake. Have some of them share stories and share one of your own. Then ask what they did the next time they faced a similar situation.

In today's story, the people of Judah failed to learn from Israel's mistake, and we will see the consequences of that failure.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Please note as you teach this story that the biblical account is graphic. Use discernment when teaching this story to small children.

Remember that at this point in history, Israel had been divided into two kingdoms. A few weeks ago, we saw that the northern kingdom was captured by the Assyrians because their kings were wicked and had led the people into idolatry. The righteous kings of the south prevented that from happening to Judah for a while, but eventually some wicked kings came to the throne. Two weeks ago we studied Manasseh, who was so wicked that God promised that Judah would be captured by Babylon. In today's story, that very thing happened.

During the reign of wicked King Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came up to Jerusalem to attack. After one and a half years, the Babylonians were successful. They captured King Zedekiah and burned his house. They also burned the temple. The Babylonians took many of the people of Jerusalem back to Babylon as captives. Only the poor were left in the land. All the treasures in the house of the Lord were also brought to Babylon. This began Judah's captivity in Babylon, a captivity that would last for 70 years. Thankfully, 2 Kings ends on a note of hope. About halfway through the captivity, the king of Babylon set free one of the old kings of Judah, King Jehoiachin, and treated him well in Babylon.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

As was stated before, and as we studied a few weeks ago, the northern kingdom of Israel was captured by the Assyrians about 150 years before today's story. The people of the southern kingdom of Judah saw first-hand what the consequences of turning away from the Lord were, yet instead of doing the right thing and following God, they rebelled. As a result, God judged them by sending the Babylonians to capture them. Judah had not learned from Israel's mistakes, and so they paid a heavy price for their idolatry and rebellion.

Israel's capture was not the only warning Judah had either. Passages such as Deuteronomy 28 warned that if the Israelites did not obey God's law, they would be taken from their land and sent to another nation. Throughout the book of Judges, the Israelites repeatedly fell into idolatry and were taken captive by other countries. And of course, in Genesis 3, the first sin led to the first and greatest exile in human history, exile from God's presence in the Garden of Eden. The theme of exile for disobedience runs throughout the Bible. The people of Judah should have known better, but instead they continued in their idolatry and disobedience.

LOOK (Continued)

Today, we have even more examples than the people of Judah had. They had the first five books of the Bible and perhaps a few more, plus the example of Israel's capture. We have the entire Bible. Scripture is filled with examples of people doing both the right and wrong thing, as well as the consequences for those actions. Throughout the Bible, those who know God's Word and know the right thing to do are held to a higher standard than the Gentile nations who did not have His Word. We have all 66 books of the Bible and the Holy Spirit, so we have no excuse for disobeying God. We ought to know better.

The best way to make sure that what happened in Israel and Judah does not happen to us is by reading the Bible and being sure to learn from its examples. James 1:22-25 tells us that it is not enough simply to know what the Bible says, but we need to put it into practice. It is important that, as believers, we are regularly doing both: we must constantly be in the Word and purposing in our hearts to obey it by God's strength.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class to explain why Judah went into exile. Ask them how we can avoid making the same mistake.

Pray: Thank the Lord for giving us the Bible as our guide. Ask for the Holy Spirit to help the class obey His Word.

Parent Question: How can we learn from the examples of the people in the Bible who sinned?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 2 Kings 24:17-25:30 by David Guzik

C. The reign of Zedekiah.

1. ([2 Kings 24:17](#)) Nebuchadnezzar makes Zedekiah king of Judah.

Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

a. **Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place:** Since Nebuchadnezzar had completely humbled Judah, he put a king on the throne whom he thought would submit to Babylon. He chose an uncle of Jehoiachin, a brother to Jehoiakim.

i. "This king (597-587 b.c.) inherited a much reduced Judah, for the Negeb was lost ([Jeremiah 13:18-19](#)) and the land weakened by the loss of its experienced personnel. There were both a pro-Egyptian element and false prophets among the survivors ([Jeremiah 28-29](#); [38:5](#))." (Wiseman)

b. **Changed his name to Zedekiah:** The name **Zedekiah** means, *The Lord is Righteous*. The righteous judgment of God would soon be seen against Judah.

2. ([2 Kings 24:18-20](#)) The evil reign and rebellion of Zedekiah.

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For because of the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

a. **He also did evil in the sight of the LORD:** [2 Chronicles 36:11-20](#) tells us more of the evil of Zedekiah, specifically that he did not listen to Jeremiah or other messengers of God. Instead, they mocked and disregarded the message.

i. "Zedekiah's *evil* ([v. 19](#)) is fully explained in [2 Chronicles 36:12-14](#). (i) He was not willing to listen to God's word through Jeremiah; (ii) he broke an oath made in Yahweh's name as a vassal of Babylon; (iii) he was unrepentant and failed to restrain leaders and priests from defiling the temple with the reintroduction of idolatrous practices." (Wiseman)

b. **He finally cast them out from His presence:** God's patience and longsuffering had finally run its course and He allowed — even instigated — the conquering of the kingdom of Judah.

i. Ultimately, there were many reasons for the exile. One mentioned by [2 Chronicles 36:21](#) is that Judah was depopulated in exile *to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.*

c. **Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon:** Jeremiah tells us that there were many false prophets in those days who preached a message of victory and triumph to Zedekiah, and he believed them instead of Jeremiah and other godly prophets like him. Therefore, he **rebelled against the king of Babylon**.

i. For example, [Jeremiah 32:1-5](#) tells us that Jeremiah clearly told Zedekiah that he would not succeed in his rebellion against Babylon. Zedekiah arrested Jeremiah and imprisoned him for this, but the prophet steadfastly stayed faithful to the message God gave him.

ii. "He had no real faith in Jehovah, Israel's covenant-keeping God, and therefore did not scruple to break his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar. But how dearly he paid for this violation of his oath!" (Knapp)

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM AND THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

A. Jerusalem is conquered.

1. ([2 Kings 25:1-3](#)) Jerusalem under siege.

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.

a. **They built a siege wall against it all around:** Nebuchadnezzar used the common method of attack in those days of securely walled cities — a **siege wall**. A siege was intended to surround a city, prevent all business and trade from entering or leaving the city, and to eventually starve the population into surrender.

i. "The Babylonians relied initially on tight control using 'watch towers' rather than *siege works*, allowing those who wished to leave to do so (cf. [2 Kings 25:11](#); [Jeremiah 38:19](#); [39:9](#)), but starving out the city ([Jeremiah 38:2-9](#))." (Wiseman)

ii. **In the ninth year of his reign:** "This is the first time in Kings that an event in the history of Israel is dated by a foreign era." (Dilday)

b. **The famine had become so severe in the city:** This was the intended goal of a siege. This indicates that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were at the point of victory over Jerusalem.

i. "The one-and-a-half-year siege may be due to (i) Nebuchadnezzar's absence at Riblah and concern with containing the Phoenician sea-ports, and (ii) his watchfulness against Egypt's potential intervention on behalf of Zedekiah ([Jeremiah 37:5](#), [11](#))." (Wiseman)

2. ([2 Kings 25:4-7](#)) Zedekiah is captured and executed.

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. **Then the city wall was broken through:** At this desperate point for Judah during the siege of Jerusalem, Zedekiah made a last-chance effort to escape the grip of the nearly-completely successful siege. They planned a secret break through the city walls and the siege lines of the Babylonians, using a diversionary tactic.

i. "It seems that the army scattered to avoid capture; some link the prophecy of [Obadiah 2-14](#) about Edom to this time." (Wiseman)

b. **The army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho:** This was a considerable distance from Jerusalem. Zedekiah probably thought that his strategy was successful, and that he had escaped the judgment that prophets such as Jeremiah had promised. Yet God's word was demonstrated to be true, and he was captured **in the plains of Jericho**.

i. "It seems ironic that here, at the very spot where Israel first set foot on the Promised Land, the last of the Davidic kings was captured and his monarchy shattered. Here, where Israel experienced her first victory as the walls of Jericho fell before unarmed men who trusted God, was the scene of her last defeat." (Dilday)

c. **Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah:** The Babylonians were not known to be as cruel as the Assyrians who conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel some 150 years earlier, but they were still experts in cruelty in their own right. They made certain that the last sight King Zedekiah saw was the murder of his own sons, and then he spent the rest of his life in darkness.

i. This fulfilled the mysterious promise God made through Ezekiel regarding Zedekiah shortly before the fall of Jerusalem: *I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.* ([Ezekiel 12:13](#))

ii. “This also fulfilled Ezekiel’s prophecy that Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon but not see it ([Ezekiel 12:13](#)). Blinding prisoners was a rare occurrence (*cf.* [Judges 16:21](#)), for most were put to work. If Zedekiah had heeded the prophet’s word, he would have saved both Jerusalem and himself ([Jeremiah 38:14-28](#)), for he was to die in Babylon ([Ezekiel 12:14](#)).” (Wiseman)

iii. “With his eyes put out, and bound in fetters, he was carried to the court of the conqueror, the symbol of the people who had rebelled against God, and had been broken in pieces.” (Morgan)

iv. “The eyes of whose mind had been put out long before; else he might have foreseen and prevented this evil — as prevision is the best means of prevention, — had he taken warning by what was foretold.” (Trapp)

v. “Josephus (*Antiquities* x.8.8) says Nebuchadnezzar ‘kept Zedekiah in prison until he died; and then buried him magnificently.’ This agrees with [Jeremiah 34:5](#).” (Knapp)

3. ([2 Kings 25:8-10](#)) The destruction of Jerusalem.

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.

a. **He burned the house of the LORD:** Solomon’s great temple was now a ruin. It would stay a ruin for many years, until it was humbly rebuilt by the returning exiles in the days of Ezra.

i. “The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building. The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next.” (Dilday)

ii. “Thus the temple was destroyed in the *eleventh* year of Zedekiah, the *nineteenth* of Nebuchadnezzar, the *first* of the XLVIIIth Olympiad, in the *one hundred and sixtieth* current year of the era of Nabonassar, *four hundred and twenty-four* years *three* months and *eight* days from the time in which Solomon laid its foundation stone.” (Clarke)

b. **Broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around:** The walls of Jerusalem — the physical security of the city — were now destroyed. Jerusalem was no longer a place of safety and security. The walls would remain a ruin until they were rebuilt by the returning exiles in the days of Nehemiah.

i. On **Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard:** “That title in Hebrew is literally, ‘the chief executioner’ or ‘the slaughterer.’ Methodically, he set about to demolish the beautiful city, burning the palace and the chief buildings, breaking down the walls, and wrecking the temple.” (Dilday)

4. ([2 Kings 25:11-17](#)) The remainder is taken captive and plundered.

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. 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.

a. **Carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city:** This was the third major wave of captivity, taking the remaining people all except for the **poor of the land**.

i. "Of the prominent men of Jerusalem, only Jeremiah and Gedaliah were left behind ([2 Kings 25:22](#); cf. [Jeremiah 39:11-14](#)). Jeremiah's stand on the Babylonian issue was doubtless well-known." (Dilday)

ii. "In Hebrew, the first twelve verses of the chapter are one long sentence, each verse beginning with 'and.' Clause is heaped upon clause in a kind of cadence, as if each one were another tick of the clock counting down Jerusalem's final hours." (Dilday)

b. **And carried their bronze to Babylon... the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away:** As the remaining people were taken captive to Babylon, so also the remaining valuables from the temple were taken. Jerusalem was left desolate, completely plundered under the judgment of God.

i. [Jeremiah 52:17-23](#) is a detailed inventory of all that the Babylonians looted from the temple.

5. ([2 Kings 25:18-21](#)) The authority of Nebuchadnezzar over Jerusalem and Judah.

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.

a. **The king of Babylon struck them and put them to death:** These last leaders of Jerusalem and Judah were also captured and put to death. The **king of Babylon** had what seemed to be complete rule over the former kingdom of Judah.

b. **Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land:** This was the land God gave to His people, the tribes of Israel. They had possessed this land for some 860 years; they took it by faith and obedience but they lost it through idolatry and sin.

i. "The reader cannot help but be struck by the passionless tone of the narrative in this chapter. Not once does the author show his feelings, even though he is describing the tragic downfall of his country. We have to turn to the Book of Lamentations for weeping and groaning." (Dilday)

ii. "Thus the nation called to peculiar position of honor, became a people scattered and peeled, losing all their privileges because of their failure to fulfill responsibility." (Morgan)

iii. "Israel wanted to be as the other nations around her, imitating their organization, and allying herself now with one, and then with another; in consequence she was swept into captivity to the very nation whose fashions she most affected ([Isaiah 39](#))." (Meyer)

iv. "And thus was Judah carried away out of her own land *four hundred and sixty-eight* years after David began to reign over it; from the division of the ten tribes *three hundred and eighty-eight* years; and from the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, *one hundred and thirty-four* years... and before Christ *five hundred and ninety*." (Clarke)

B. Judah and Jerusalem under the Babylonians.

1. ([2 Kings 25:22-24](#)) Gedaliah is made the governor.

Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. Now when all the captains of the armies, they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah — Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, “Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.”

a. **The king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor:** It seems that Gedaliah was a good and godly man, who was a friend of the prophet Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 26:24](#) and [39:14](#)).

i. “Gedaliah had the reputation of being gentle and generous (Josephus, *Antiquities* x.9.1) and his enemies played on this.” (Wiseman)

b. **Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you:** It seemed unpatriotic and perhaps ungodly to do this, but it was the right thing to do. The best they could do under this situation of deserved and unstoppable judgment was to simply accept it from the hand of God and do the right thing under the Babylonians.

i. It was the right thing to do because although it was hard to accept, it was true that the Babylonians were doing the work of God in bringing this judgment upon the deserving kingdom of Judah. In this situation, to resist the Babylonians was to resist God. It was better to humble oneself and to submit to the judgment of God brought through the Babylonians.

ii. This was the question that bothered the prophet Habakkuk so much: Even though Judah was wicked and deserved judgment, how could God use an even more wicked kingdom like Babylon to bring judgment? Habakkuk dealt with these difficult questions in [Habakkuk 1:5-2:8](#).

2. ([2 Kings 25:25-26](#)) The assassination of Gedaliah.

But it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

a. **Came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah:** Because Gedaliah led the remaining people of Judah to submit to the Babylonians (also here called **the Chaldeans**), he was assassinated as a traitor to the resistance movement against the Babylonians.

b. **All the people... arose and went to Egypt:** They did this because they were afraid of what the Babylonians would do to them in light of the assassination of Gedaliah the governor. In this case, going **to Egypt** was worse than submitting to the judgment of God brought through the Babylonians.

i. “The existence of the Jews in Egypt in the fifth century is now illustrated by the Elephantine Papyri.” (Dilday)

3. ([2 Kings 25:27-30](#)) Jehoiachin’s situation in Babylon improves.

Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. And as for his provisions, *there was* a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

a. **In the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah:** This King **Jehoiachin** was not the last king of Judah; Zedekiah came after him. But he was taken away to Babylon in bronze fetters ([2 Kings 24:10-12](#)). These last events of 2 Kings came when Jehoiachin had been a captive for many years.

i. "Since he was seemingly considered by the Judeans the last legitimate king, news of his later condition would be of great significance." (Dilday)

b. **Released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison... spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat:** The final words of the Book of 2 Kings describe small kindnesses and blessings given in the worst circumstances. Judah was still depopulated; the people of God were still exiled; and the king of Judah was still a prisoner in Babylon. Yet, looking for even small notes of grace and mercy as evidences of the returning favor of God, the divine historian noted that King Jehoiachin began to receive better treatment in Babylon.

i. "This resulted from an agreement (mt, 'spoke good (things) with him') rather than just generally *spoke kindly to him*." (Wiseman)

ii. "The Rabbins tell us that, his father returning to his right mind, after that he had for seven years' space been turned a-grazing among the beasts of the field, cast Evil-merodach into the same prison with Jehoiachin, who told him his case, and thereby found this favour with him." (Trapp)

iii. "This second appendix is added to remind the reader that while Jehoiachin was still in Babylon as the representative of David's dynasty God still preserved his people. Some see this as intended to end the history on a hopeful note, perhaps even of 'Messianic revival'." (Wiseman)

iv. This was small, but evidence nonetheless that God was not done blessing and restoring His people, foreshadowing even greater blessing and restoration to come.

v. "Is it to be supposed that the king of Babylon took more care of Jehoiachin than God will take care of us?" (Meyer)