

JUDAH WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE

2 CHRONICLES 36



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The people of Judah continued to sin and were destroyed by Babylon. Even though God was patient, all sin deserves judgment. God's patience is meant to lead us to repentance. Those who repent and trust in Jesus will escape God's judgment.

STORY POINT: The people's consequence for disobeying God was exile to Babylon.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Growing up, you likely learned that disobedience has consequences. The people of Judah learned that the consequence for their disobedience to God was exile to Babylon. Despite their sin and unfaithfulness, God had been very patient with His people and was slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Not only had God sent the prophets to warn and encourage the people, but He also gave them good kings to help set an example. Still, the people continued to sin and worship idols. In today's text, the people of Judah once again find themselves in the hands of evil kings.

King Jehoahaz, son of the final good king, Josiah, was dethroned by King Neco of Egypt after only three months of ruling. King Neco made his brother, Jehoiakim, king in his place. Jehoiakim, however, was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar eleven years later. Next came his son, King Jehoiachin. He also did evil in the Lord's sight and was quickly replaced by Zedekiah.

King Zedekiah ruled over Judah for eleven years. He is described as a hard and stubborn man who refused to turn to the Lord (2 Chronicles 36:13). In the same way, the people and priests became more and more unfaithful to God.

Because of the sin of the people and their disregard for the many warnings they received, God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the nation of Judah. The Babylonians took all the treasures from the temple and palace and burned them down. This all came to pass just as God had said through the prophet Jeremiah. God's people were captured and taken to Babylon. Yet, hope remained: after 70 years, God promised to rescue and restore His people to their land.

When we disobey God, we also face consequences. For those who have not trusted in Jesus, the consequence is eternal death in hell. The good news is that Jesus bore the consequences for all who trust in Him. The Bible shares how Jesus "bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Our sin has been paid for by His death and defeated by His resurrection.

As you prepare this week, remember that we serve a God who is faithful to keep His word. Pray for boys and girls to understand the consequences of their sin, so they can experience the gift of Jesus' forgiveness and eternal life.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- “Add It Up” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- paper cups, 1 per kid

Session Starter (Option 2)

- paper crowns, 4
- music



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- plastic cups, 25–30 per team

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- “Order the Events” activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- “Judah Was Taken Captive” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Old Testament Mediterranean Map or modern-day map (optional)

Questions from Kids

- “Unit 15, Session 4” Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- “A Moment of Vast Opportunity” missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9)” song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- sticky notes



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “When have you been patient with someone? When has someone been patient with you?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Add It Up” activity page.

| **SAY** “God was patient with the people of Judah, giving them time to repent. But eventually, they were taken captive to Babylon for 70 years.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: DESTROY IT

Form kids into two teams. Line up each team at one end of the room. At the opposite end of the room, place paper cups in a row. Make sure to have a paper cup for each kid. On your start, challenge groups to send one kid to stomp on the first paper cup, “destroying” it. When the kids run back to their team, the next kid will go. Repeat, until one team is the first to “destroy” all their cups.

| **SAY** “The cups in this game are like the city of Jerusalem in our story. God was patient with His people, giving them time to repent. But because God’s people continued to sin, God allowed the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. **THE PEOPLE’S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEDIING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** However, we’ll see how God did not abandon His people. Even though their sin was great, God would keep His promise to rescue them and bring the Messiah into the world.”

OPTION 2: REMOVE THE KINGS



Create four paper crowns. Lead kids to sit in a circle and begin playing music while they pass the crowns around. When the music stops, the kids holding a crown are out. When the group becomes less than five kids, play with only two paper crowns until one kid is the winner. (For smaller groups, play the game with fewer crowns such as two or three.)

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how the last four kings of Judah were wicked. We’ll learn that God allowed the nation of Babylon to attack Judah. During these different sieges by the King of Babylon, each of these last four kings of Judah were removed as king.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I am happy to see you today. Did you bring your Bible with you? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let's open our Bibles to the book of 2 Chronicles. [Assist kids in finding 2 Chronicles in their Bible.] As we hear our story, we will learn how Judah was taken captive by the nation of Babylon.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah had some good kings, but they also had many wicked kings. The people worshiped the idols of other nations and turned away from God. Even in their sin, God was patient. But eventually, God punished His people for their sin. In our story, we'll see how **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEDIING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let's pray: 'Dear God, help us hear Your Word and turn away from sin. Please give us hearts that love You and want to follow You. In Jesus' name, amen.'

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY Let's review our big picture question: **What is God like?** [Allow responses.] **God is holy, good, and loving.**

Even through God's judgment on sin, we can see how God is holy, good, and loving. God's holiness will always mean that sin must be punished. And God is good to punish sin. It would be wrong for God to allow evil and sinfulness to never be punished. In His love, God disciplines His children so they will turn away from their sin and trust in Him. Today, as we learn about the consequences Judah faced for their sin, we can remember how Jesus faced the punishment we deserve for our sin. Jesus shows us God's holy, good, and loving character.

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY We have already learned how the Northern Kingdom was destroyed, and the people were taken captive to Assyria. Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was all that remained of God's people. While God sent prophets to Judah to tell them to repent of their sin, the people remained stubborn and did not repent. The prophets said God would judge their sin by sending the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah. Today, we will see that **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEDIING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.**



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Chronicles 36. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Judah Was Taken Captive.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JUDAH WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE

“Even though the people of Judah continued to sin, God gave them chance after chance to turn from their sin and return to Him. He sent prophets to warn and encourage them. He gave them good kings who did what was right and set good examples. **But God's people did not listen.** They hated God's words and mocked His prophets. The people continued to sin and worship idols.

Josiah was the last good king of Judah. His son, Jehoahaz (jih HOH uh haz) was only king for three months before God allowed the king of Egypt to take him away. The king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother, Jehoiakim (jih HOY uh kim), king over Judah.

Jehoiakim did evil in the sight of God. So, God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to attack him and take him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the riches of God's temple to Babylon.

Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin (jih HOY uh kin), became king in his place. He did evil in the sight of God and was only king for three months. Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar told Jehoiachin to bring even more riches from God's temple. **Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah (zed uh KIGH uh), Jehoiachin's brother, king over Judah.**

Zedekiah also did what was evil in the sight of God. He did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah. **Under Zedekiah's leadership, the people became more and more sinful like the other nations.** They dishonored the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.

Because the people continued to sin and rebelled against God, God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the nation of Judah. Their army attacked and conquered them. They took all the treasures from God's temple and from the king's palace. They burned the temple and the palaces and tore down the wall of the city. **King Nebuchadnezzar took the people who survived the attack to Babylon to be servants. Jeremiah had warned God's people about this, and now his words had come true. God said the people would be captives in Babylon for 70 years.**

Christ Connection: The people of Judah continued to sin and were destroyed by Babylon. Even though God was patient, all sin deserves judgment. God's patience is meant to lead us to repentance. Those who repent and trust in Jesus will escape God's judgment. **”**

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display a map: Point to Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Or, point to Iraq on a modern-day map.

Vary your tone: Fluctuate the tone of your voice as you tell the story to emphasize God's judgment, but also the hope God promised His people.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY The people of Judah continued to rebel against God and His ways. The last four kings of Judah were evil. Who were the last four kings of Judah? [Allow responses.] Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah led the people to worship other gods and do what was wrong in God's eyes.

Despite all of God's warnings, God's people did not listen. Because God is just, He will punish sin. First, God punished King Jehoahaz by allowing the king of Egypt to remove Jehoahaz as king. The Bible reminds us that those who set themselves up against God will be humbled (Isaiah 2:12). After the king of Egypt made Jehoiakim king of Judah, who did God send to attack Judah? Look at 2 Chronicles 36:6. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Chronicles 36:6 aloud.] God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to attack Judah and take Jehoiakim to Babylon.

Eventually, King Jehoiachin was also taken to Babylon. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and destroyed Judah during the reign of Zedekiah. What happened to the city of Jerusalem and the people of Judah? Look at 2 Chronicles 36:19-20. [Ask a volunteer to read 2 Chronicles 36:19-20 aloud.] The walls, temple, and palace of Jerusalem were destroyed. **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEDIING GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.**

In His love, God disciplined His people. Even though God was patient, all sin deserves judgment. God's patience is meant to lead us to repentance. Those who repent and trust in Jesus will escape God's judgment. **”**

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY We all deserve punishment for our sin, but through Jesus, we don't have to face the punishment we deserve. God made the way for us to be right with Him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Anyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved (Romans 10:13). **”**

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 15, Session 4" Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How can we know that God will always be there for us, even when we sometimes feel He isn't?
2. Why is trusting in Jesus the only way we can be with God forever?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Play the missions video, explaining how many people in North Africa and the Middle East need to hear the gospel. Invite kids to point out how the cultures in the video may be similar or different to their own.

SAY In the video, you may have noticed how the land of Northern Africa and the Middle East



is desert-like. The video also pointed out how many people in North Africa and the Middle East are Muslim or Jewish. A woman named Vera is a missionary to this area and is working to share the gospel with people who are Muslim. However, she faces some challenges. Oftentimes the people are not interested in hearing about Jesus. There is also the threat of persecution for people who are Christians. And it can be difficult to reach people who live in remote, desert areas. Vera needs the wisdom of God to best know how to work among the people and build relationships that will allow the people to be open to hearing the good news about Jesus. **“**

Pray for Vera as she continues to build relationships with the Muslim people. Ask God to open the hearts of the people of North Africa and the Middle East so that they will be willing to trust in Jesus and be forgiven of sin.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

SAY **“** God is good all the time! Even when the people of Judah faced consequences for their sin, God was good. His discipline is meant to lead people to repentance so they can find forgiveness of their sin. Also, He is good to punish sin because He is just. **”**

Form kids into groups of two or three. Give each group a set of sticky notes. Direct groups to write a word of the key passage on each sticky note. Then guide kids to find a place on a wall or on the floor where they will scramble the words out of order. When you say "go," challenge kids to put the words in the correct order.

Lead kids to sing "The Lord Is Good (Psalm 145:9)." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY **“** Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your only Son to die for our sins. Thank You for making the way for us to be set free from sin and death. Amen. **”**

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 36. Explain that Babylon in the Bible is an area of the world now known as the country of Iraq. Remind kids that the stories in the Bible are true and happened in real places.

Consider pointing to Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Chronicles 36:20 or have the kids follow along as you read.

SAY **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** All sin is disobedience to God, and God will punish sin. The good news of the gospel is that God has given us the way to be saved from His judgment of sin! When we put our trust in Jesus, we don't have to fear God's judgment. We can give thanks to God because Jesus took the punishment we deserve.

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| SAY **What is the ultimate consequence people face for sin if they don't trust in Jesus?**

Tell kids that the Bible tells us that the punishment for sin is eternal death in hell. Discuss how sin deserves eternal punishment because it is disobedience to an eternal God. Discuss how everyone will experience God's justice in one of two ways. Those who do not trust in Jesus will face eternal death in hell. Those who do trust in Jesus will be forgiven and receive eternal life in heaven because Jesus took the punishment they deserve.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 25:46.)

| SAY **Why was it loving for God to not ignore the people's sin?**

Lead kids to understand that it is because God loved the people of Judah that He disciplined them. Remind kids that God gave the people of Judah lots of chances to turn back to Him.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 2:4.)

| SAY **How did God's promise to bring the people home after 70 years give them hope?**

Discuss how God is always true to His words. Just as He said that He would punish the people for their sin, and it happened, God also promised that He would restore them to their home in Judah. Share how God's promises are meant to give us hope as well. We can trust that one day, Jesus will come again to bring His people to their forever home with Him.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 10:23.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





LIVE

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: AND THE WALLS FELL...

Form kids into two teams and provide each team with 25–30 plastic cups. Lead kids to form the cups into a wall. They can choose the height and width of their wall. Direct each team to sit behind their wall. Then give each kid a piece of paper to crumple into a ball. On your start, challenge kids to throw the paper ball at the wall, trying to knock it down. After each kid has thrown his or her ball, award a point to the team who knocked down the most cups. Repeat, until one team is the first to knock down all the cups.

SAY **“**Today, we learned that when Babylon attacked Jerusalem, they tore down the walls. The walls were an important structure that offered safety to the city. We'll see later how the people returned to rebuild the walls. But the picture of the walls falling down reminds us of how the sin in our heart can become like a wall when we continue to disobey God. However, through faith in Jesus, the wall of sin is destroyed, and through the Holy Spirit, we can rightly love and obey God. **”**

OPTION 2: GOD IS HOLY

Form kids into groups of two or three and provide each group with a piece of paper. At the top of the paper invite kids to write Be Holy. Provide each group with a Bible and direct them to read 1 Peter 1:15-16. Tell kids that to be holy like God means to live in ways that show others what He is like. To be holy means to follow God's ways rather than the world's ways. Challenge groups to write down ways they can be holy like God. Then invite groups to share what they wrote. Or, invite groups to pick one thing they wrote and act it out in front of the class.

SAY **“**God's people were called to be set apart and represent Him to the world. Yet, His people failed to be holy, and they were punished. **THE PEOPLE'S CONSEQUENCE FOR DISOBEDIENCE WAS EXILE TO BABYLON.** Today, God still commands Christians to be holy and live in ways that glorify Him. However, now God's people have the Holy Spirit who gives them power to obey God and changes them to be like Jesus. **”**



2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God because Jesus took the punishment we deserve. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Order the Events” on the activity page.