

Bible Story 24: FALL OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

SCRIPTURE: 2 KINGS 17:1-2,5-7,12-15; 18:1-3; 19:20,32-36; 21:1-2,19-20; 22:1-2,5, 8-9,12-13; 23:1-3,31-32,36-37; 24:8-9,10-14,19-20; 25:1-4,8-12

MEMORY VERSE: PSALM 86:11

BIBLE STORY:

The Israelite people were divided into two different kingdoms: (1) **Israel**, in the north, and (2) **Judah**, in the south.

I S R A E L (northern kingdom)

All the kings that ruled in Israel, the northern kingdom, did evil things. The kings led their people to build altars and worship false idols. The people in Israel sinned, doing things against God, by worshiping these idols. God became very angry with them. Therefore, God sent prophets. These prophets were chosen by God to preach his Word. Sadly, the kings and the people in Israel would not listen to the prophets and did not turn back to serving God.

Israel fell in 722 BC when the king of Assyria captured the capital city, Samaria. The Israelites were taken as prisoners to Assyria. The king of Assyria sent other groups of people to live in Samaria. They wanted to worship the God of Israel while at the same time worshiping idols of other gods.

JUDAH (southern kingdom)

With the fall of Israel, there was only the southern kingdom left, Judah. Hezekiah was Judah's king for twenty-nine years. He worshiped God and followed God's commandments. God was pleased with King Hezekiah. One day the enemy, the king of Assyria, positioned his army around the capital city of Jerusalem, ready to attack the people of Judah. The prophet Isaiah told King Hezekiah to pray. God listened to King Hezekiah's prayer and sent an angel that

fatally wounded 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. The enemy fled. God protected the people in Jerusalem and they worshiped him.

The next two kings after Hezekiah did not obey God. But the following king, Josiah, pleased God. He was only eight years old when he became king. He had the Temple in Jerusalem reconstructed. The workers found the book of the Laws of Moses hidden in the Temple and gave it to the king. Josiah united all the leaders and read the entire book. The people in Judah decided to obey all the laws and commandments of God. All the idols were destroyed. Josiah served thirty years as king and served God with all his heart.

Unhappily, the next kings forgot God and did many things that displeased him. Now the people in Judah did not serve God. The prophets, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, told them to return and serve God, but they did not listen. God became very angry and, finally, let the enemy, King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon, conquer Judah. The Babylonian soldiers tore down the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to the Temple, carried away all the riches of the city, and the people of Judah were taken as prisoners to Babylon. The poor people remained in Jerusalem.

Judah fell and was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

Yet, there was hope. The prophet Jeremiah foretold that after 70 years of captivity, some of the descendants would return to Jerusalem to serve God.

LIFE LESSONS:

1. God protected and cared for the people in Judah when they served him. Serve God, trusting him to protect and take care of your life.
2. The disobedient people in Israel and Judah caused themselves many problems. God's laws were written to help protect against bad consequences. Disobedience can bring problems for your life. Obey God's laws and commandments.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The Israelites were divided into two kingdoms. What were they? Where were they located?
2. Why did God permit the Assyrians to conquer the people of Israel? Where were they taken?
3. When the men were reconstructing the Temple, they found the book of the Law of Moses. What did King Josiah and the people do after they read Moses' book?
4. Should we read God's Word, the Bible? What are some special Bible stories and verses you like?
5. Why did God permit King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon to conquer the people of Judah? Where were these prisoners taken?
6. Why did God give us laws to follow? What happens when someone disobeys God?
7. Who is a prophet? What did the prophet Jeremiah foretell would happen to ones taken to Babylon?
8. What are some things that a person does when he/she disobeys God? What are some of the consequences when someone is disobedient?
9. What should we do when we do something wrong?
10. How can we be right with God after we disobey him?
11. What is the difference between someone obeying God and having to face problems, and when someone is disobedient to God and faces difficulties?

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS BIBLE STORY:

Choose activities that may be used in your specific situation. Consider the age and maturity of each person, locality where the story will be told (customs and traditions), and available resources, time and space.

PRESENTATION:

- Ask: *"What happens when someone steals? When there are fights?"* If possible, show some pictures or news items of examples of someone stealing, fighting, etc. Discuss what they did wrong and what happened when they were caught. Stress the fact that there are consequences to our actions.

- Then quickly review previous Bible stories so that each person will understand this story, such as:

"The Israelites were a chosen people of God. They worshiped God. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God sent Moses to lead them to the Promised Land. After Moses died, Joshua became the new leader and led the Israelites into the Promised Land, conquering Jericho. There were many Israelites and so they were divided into twelve different Tribes, living throughout the Promised Land. After many, many years, the Israelites disagreed among themselves about who was to be their new king. So the Israelite people divided themselves into two Kingdoms: Judah, in the south and Israel, in the north. Now listen as I tell today's Bible story."

- Tell the Bible story.

- Write encouraging letters and cards;
- On holidays send care packages, including extra treats for their "buddies;"
- Send a Bible, books, music CDs, etc.

(2) For families of military personnel who are away from home:

- Mow their yard or do other chores around the house;
- Do repairs around the house or vehicle;
- Baby-sit;
- Take their children on outings;
- Include the military personnel's family on holiday celebrations.

(3) For military personnel home with their families:

- Prepare a meal or give a gift certificate to a restaurant for the serviceman/woman and/or family;
- Baby-sit so the couple can go out on a date together.
- Invite them to your church and its activities.

GAME: "DODGE BALL"

- Form a circle, with one or two persons in the center. The ones in the outer circle toss the ball, trying to touch someone who is inside the circle. Whenever the ball touches someone, the individual trades places. Be sure so no one is hurt while playing the game.

- Option: If you play the game inside, use a soft, sponge ball or balloon.

MISSION ACTIVITY: "DODGE BALL"

- Show appreciation for one or more servicemen and women, and their families. Perhaps they are members of your family, church or neighborhood.

(1) For military personnel serving on the field:

DAILY BIBLE READING - 2 Kings 17:1-2,5-7,12-15; 18:1-3; 19:20,32-36; 21:1-2,19-20; 22:1-2,5,8-9,

| 1 ST | 2 ND | 3 RD | 4 TH | 5 TH | 6 TH | 7 TH |
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