

Bible Story 24: FALL OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

SCRIPTURE: Israel: 1 Kings 12:25-31; 2 Kings 17:1-2,5-7,12-15
Judah: 2 Kings 18:1-3; 21:1-3; 22:1-2,5,8,10; 23:1-3,31-32; 25:1-6,8-12

MEMORY VERSE: Exodus 20:3 or Exodus 20:3-6

BIBLE STORY:

The Israelites were living in two different places called kingdoms. **Israel** was in the north and **Judah** was in the south.

ISRAEL, THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

The people in Israel disobeyed God. The first king in the northern kingdom of Israel was Jeroboam, who built two golden calves for the people to worship in Bethel and Dan. All the following kings of this kingdom continued to lead the people in idolatry and immoral practices.

God sent prophets like Elijah and Elisha to draw His people back to only serve Him. Did they turn back to serve only God? No! Finally God's judgment came. God let the king of Assyria conquer Samaria. The people were captured and taken far away to other countries. The Assyrian king brought people from other countries to live in Samaria. As years passed, these people married Jews, and this is the beginning of the people called the "Samaritans."

JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

Meanwhile the southern kingdom of Judah had some good kings that obeyed God, such as King Hezekiah. Yet most of Judah's kings disobeyed God by making idols.

Josiah became king of Judah when he was only eight years old. King Josiah always pleased God. He ordered men to reconstruct the Temple in Jerusalem. The workers found the book of the Laws of Moses hidden in the Temple. They gave it to the king, who united all the leaders and the whole book was read. Everyone decided to obey all the laws and commandments of God. All the idols were destroyed. God was pleased. King Josiah served thirty years as king and served God with all his heart.

After King Josiah died, three more kings ruled Judah. Then sadly, the people in Judah rejected God. They did not want to only worship and serve God. They worshiped idols. Finally God's judgment came. God let King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquer Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah. The people of Judah were taken away as prisoners to Babylon, a long distance away.

There was hope. The prophet Jeremiah said that some of the people would one day return to Jerusalem and serve God.

PART 1: PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from the story?
2. How can you apply this story to your life?

PART 2: GENERIC QUESTIONS

1. What do you like about the story?
2. What is there in the story that you do not understand?
3. Who are the main people in the story?
4. What problems did the people face?
5. How did the people face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

PART 3: SPECIFIC 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, the northern kingdom? Where were they taken?
3. In the southern kingdom of Israel, the book of the Law of Moses was found when they were reconstructing the Temple. What did King Josiah and the people do after they read Moses' book?
4. Why 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 they taken?
6. Why did God give us laws to follow? What happens when someone disobeys God?
7. What words of hope did the prophet Jeremiah say?
8. What is sin?
 - What sin did the people in our story do against God?
 - What judgment did God send for their sins?
 - What are some sins done today?
 - Does God continue to send His judgment, His punishment, for sins committed?
 - How can we receive forgiveness of our sins? (Read 1 John 1:9.)
 - Even if God forgives us, are there some consequences we may face? Name some consequences to stealing, cheating, etc. Is there hope? *(Yes, God will be with us as we face the consequences, giving us strength, guidance and His grace.)*