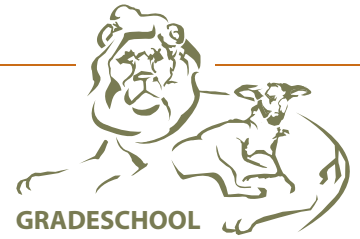


THE FALL OF ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 17:6-15



Judgment comes to those who refuse the loving warnings of God.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God brought judgment to Israel through Assyria – Shortly after Hoshea began to reign over Israel in Samaria, the king of Assyria threatened to invade. In order to avert a war, Hoshea basically surrendered and agreed to allow Assyria to rule over Israel. God was supposed to rule over Israel. The Assyrian empire required him to pay tribute (2 Kings 17:3). No indication is given that Hoshea called out to the Lord for help. Instead, Hoshea looked to Egypt to form an alliance. Then he stopped sending money to Assyria. However, no help came from Egypt. The king of Assyria wasted no time in placing Hoshea in prison and invading all the land. The Assyrians besieged the capitol city of Samaria for three years. In all that time, Israel did not repent of its evil ways.

Israel would not listen – Israel would not listen to the warnings of the Lord. They did not believe God. They despised God's commands. They followed false idols. In the end they abandoned all of God's commands and even sacrificed their sons and daughters as offerings. They worshipped and served Baal and sold themselves to do evil. Therefore, God judged them by raising up the Assyrians to conquer them.

Only the tribe of Judah is spared - At first God spared the tribe of Judah in the south and their capital city, Jerusalem. Eventually, however, even Judah turned away from the Lord and was taken captive. In the end, all of Israel turned away from the Lord, and the Lord judged them.

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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

In Luke 11:47, Jesus told the experts of the law that their forefathers killed and persecuted the prophets. Jesus came as the greatest prophet. Like the prophets who came to Israel to warn them against their idolatry, these teachers of the law did not listen to Jesus but opposed Him.

Instead of listening to the prophets, Israel served and worshipped other gods as did Judah in the southern kingdom. God in His mercy did not destroy them completely but sent His only Son to be a prophet to bring the Word of God, a priest to offer Himself as an acceptable sacrifice, and a King to rule in righteousness.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

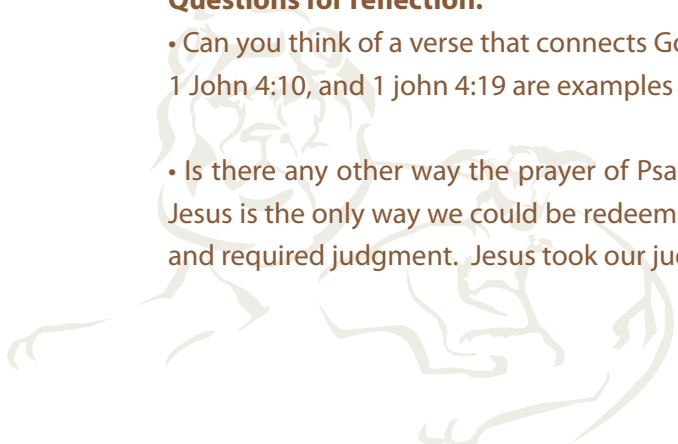
Bible Passage: Psalm 44:23-26

Connecting the passage to Christ:

In John 3:16 we read that it was because of God's love for the world that He sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem His people. Here the psalmist prays for God to redeem his people. He didn't ask for Jesus by name, but Jesus is the only answer to the prayer in Psalm 44:26.

Questions for reflection:

- Can you think of a verse that connects God's salvation in Jesus with His love for the world? (John 3:16, 1 John 4:10, and 1 John 4:19 are examples of the connection between His love and redemption.)
- Is there any other way the prayer of Psalm 44:26 could have been answered apart from Jesus? (No, Jesus is the only way we could be redeemed and brought back to God. Our sin separated us from God and required judgment. Jesus took our judgment.)



THE FALL OF ISRAEL

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW

Supplies

a bag full of recognizable seeds such as grass seed, feed corn, acorns, or sunflower seeds (avoid odd flower seeds that the children would not know)

First read today's text to the class. Then pass out the seeds. The seeds are just a prop to connect Galatians 6:7-8 in relation to today's text.

Pass around a seed to each person. Ask them to identify it and what its purpose is – planting or eating, etc. Then go around to each row of children or various groups and ask them if they would go home and plant their seeds. Then matter-of-factly tell the various groups to use the seeds to plant corn, lettuce, tomatoes, and green peppers.

The group should object to the absurd idea that you could plant one seed and get some other plant. Play dumb and have them explain to you that whatever you reap you sow. Then read Galatians 6:7-8 to them. Relate this biblical truth to the story of Israel.



THE FALL OF ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 17:6-15

I WARNED YOU

Supplies

- paper shredder
- miscellaneous papers
- clear plastic trash bag

The object of this short sketch is simply to demonstrate that there are consequences to ignoring warnings. Use this as a transition into the text or a skit for after you have read the passage.

Two teachers or helpers are involved. Papers are scattered across the front of the room. The skit can be done ad lib once the purpose is understood.

Teacher 1: Man this place is a mess. (Turning to the class.) Hey, I know. I just got a new paper shredder. What a great time to try it out. I'm so glad I told Teacher #2 to get her important papers picked up. (Teacher #1 starts shredding the papers and is excited about the shredded pieces.)

Teacher 1: Hey, this stuff would make great litter for my new puppy. (She starts putting the shreds in the plastic bag. Then she continues shredding.)

Teacher 2: (Talking to herself.) I know I left it around here somewhere. Hey, Teacher #1, did you see my papers?

Teacher 1: No. What papers?

Teacher 2: Oh, I had some notes for the class and some important letters.

Teacher 1: (Looking at plastic bag with shreds and hiding it behind their back.) Did you remember to pick up your papers before class that you had lying around?

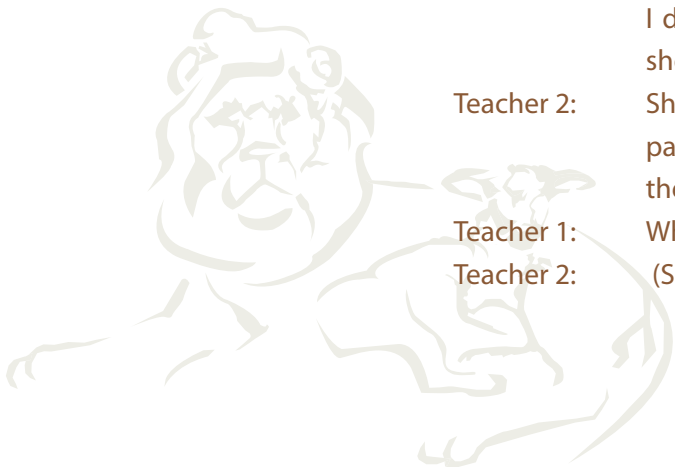
Teacher 2: Well, that's what I came in to do. Wait a minute, did you start cleaning up again? What did you do with my papers? (Teacher #2 looks at the few remaining papers and can't find the ones they are looking for.) What is behind your back?

Teacher 1: Huh? Well, uh, I told you I was going to clean up. I warned you. You can't say I didn't warn you. Well, look at the bright side, at least I didn't put the shreds in my puppy's cage yet. (Teacher #1 shows the plastic bag.)

Teacher 2: Shreds? Puppy? What have you done to . . . my . . . im-por-tant pa-pers? (Teacher #2 takes the bag and sadly starts walking out of the room.)

Teacher 1: Where are you going?

Teacher 2: (Sadly.) To get some clear tape. (Leaves with fake crying.)



THE FALL OF ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 17:6-15

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Did anyone ever warn you something was going to happen but you didn't listen and suffered the consequences? (Perhaps someone left their shoes outside overnight and rain got them wet or they didn't put papers away and something spilled on them.)
- Why do people give us warnings? (Warnings are designed to help us change bad or harmful behavior.)
- What kind of warnings did God give Israel? (God warned Israel not to marry foreign women or follow after other gods.)

Continue to draw the children out about how Israel blatantly disobeyed the warnings of God and finally was judged by God.



THE FALL OF ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 17:6-15

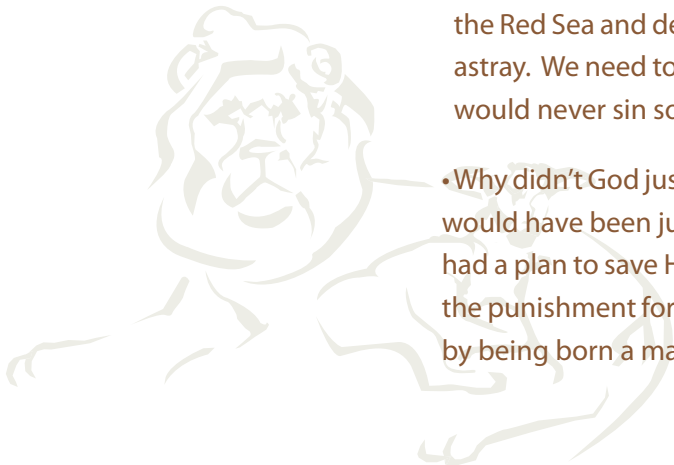
LIST THE EVILS

Read through the passage and then ask the children to list all the sins of Israel.

- Feared other gods.
- Walked in the customs of the other nations.
- Did things secretly against the Lord that were not right.
- Built high places in their towns.
- Set up pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree.
- They made offerings on all the high places.
- They did wicked things.
- They served idols.
- They would not listen to God's warnings.
- They despised God's statutes and His covenant.
- They went after false idols.
- They followed the nations that were around them.
- They abandoned all the commandments of the Lord.
- They made metal images of two calves.
- They made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven.
- They served Baal.
- They burned their sons and their daughters as offerings.
- They used divination and omens.
- They sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Do you think the Lord was just in punishing Israel? (Help the children to see that Israel had committed incredible sins against God.)
- What should we learn from Israel's mistakes? (Even though God took them through the Red Sea and delivered them from the hands of their enemies, Israel could be led astray. We need to be careful that we obey and serve the Lord rather than think we would never sin so badly.)
- Why didn't God just wipe out Judah or even all mankind for their wrongdoing? (God would have been justified in wiping out all of Israel and Judah but God in His mercy had a plan to save His people. God's plan was for Jesus to die and take upon Himself the punishment for our sin. Jesus lived a sinless life and gave His righteousness to us by being born a man and standing before God as our representative.)



THE FALL OF ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 17:6-15

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of the armies of Syria surrounding the city of Samaria.

FOR OLDER GRADES

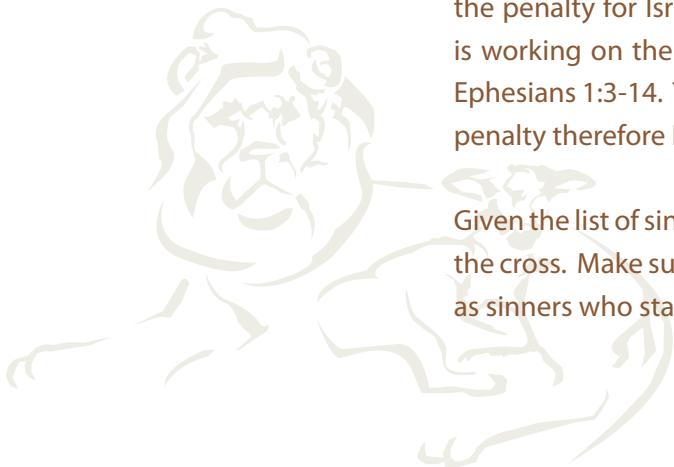
Use the following activity for practical application and discovery of this lesson:

Divide the class into a court. Assign 12 jurors, one judge (a teacher), three prosecuting attorneys, and three defense attorneys. Have one person sit as the accused. Call the accused, Israel.

Have all the children read the passage and make a list of charges. Have the prosecution go first leveling all the charges against Israel.

Then have the defense come forward with their defense. They are going to use the Gospel as their defense. Their argument is that although Israel is guilty, Jesus took the penalty for Israel's guilt. Help them with their defense while the prosecution is working on their case. They can use Romans 3:21-26, Galatians 3:7-14, and/or Ephesians 1:3-14. Their basic defense is that Israel is guilty but Jesus paid the death penalty therefore Israel should be set free if they accept Jesus' work on the cross.

Given the list of sins Israel committed, the children should become more amazed by the cross. Make sure they do not have a self-righteous response but see themselves as sinners who stand with Israel on trial in need of the Gospel.



THE FALL OF ISRAEL

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A LITTLE BIT MORE

High Place – Just as the name suggests, a high place was a location on the top of a mountain or hill. In pagan culture altars were erected for the purpose of worship. There seems an obvious psychological advantage to getting closer to the clouds and sky where most of the gods were believed to be. Where there were no hills, towers or pyramids could be built. Frequently a high place would have an altar and a wooden pole or stone obelisk or pillar which was also worshipped. The Canaanites used high places in their worship and Israel was required to destroy them and drive out all the people who worshipped them, see Numbers 33:52.

