

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 CHRONICLES 36:1-20



God's judgment comes when His people do not repent.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Judah's last kings were wicked in the sight of the Lord – After Josiah's death, his son Jehoahaz became king. Jehoahaz did what was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 23:30-35). Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz's brother, became king after him and also did evil in the sight of the Lord. During Jehoiakim's reign, the King of Babylon captured him, bound him in chains, and took the first of the exiles along with some of the temple vessels away to Babylon. We learn from Daniel 1:1-3 that this was when Daniel was taken to Babylon. Jehoiachin, the captured king's son, reigned for three months. During his reign Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and deported thousands of fighting men and craftsman, leaving only the poorest people behind. He also took all the golden articles from the temple (2 Kings 24:1-7). Finally, Nebuchadnezzar established Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle, as king, but he also ruled in wickedness until Jerusalem fell.

God sent His messengers but the Kings of Judah do not listen – In verse fifteen we read that God had persistently sent prophets to the people of Judah. However, they mocked the prophets and despised their words. God used Jeremiah to warn the people by saying things like, "Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place" (Jeremiah 7:3). He also said, "Hear the words of this covenant and do them. For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day, saying, Obey my voice" (Jeremiah 11:7). Needless to say, neither the kings nor the people of Judah repented of their sin.

Jerusalem fell and was captured – Not only did Zedekiah rebel against the Lord, but he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:13). As a result, Nebuchadnezzar made war against Jerusalem and trapped the people inside the city without supplies until they surrendered (2 Kings 25:1). The walls of Jerusalem were broken down (2 Kings 25:10), and the house of the Lord was burned (2 Kings 25:9). The Babylonians also took away all the precious articles made of silver and bronze that were still in the temple (2 King 25:17). The once great Temple, built by Solomon, was laid to waste and the surrounding buildings were destroyed.

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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.

God sent His prophet Jeremiah to warn the kings of Judah. The kings did not listen to Jeremiah and in the end God had no remedy, see 2 Chronicles 36:16. Jerusalem was ransacked and its people taken into captivity.

God however, was not finished speaking through Jeremiah. There would be another king from the line of David. This king would be a Righteous branch and "He will be called The Lord Our Righteousness", see Jeremiah 23:5-6. Jesus is that King!

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

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.

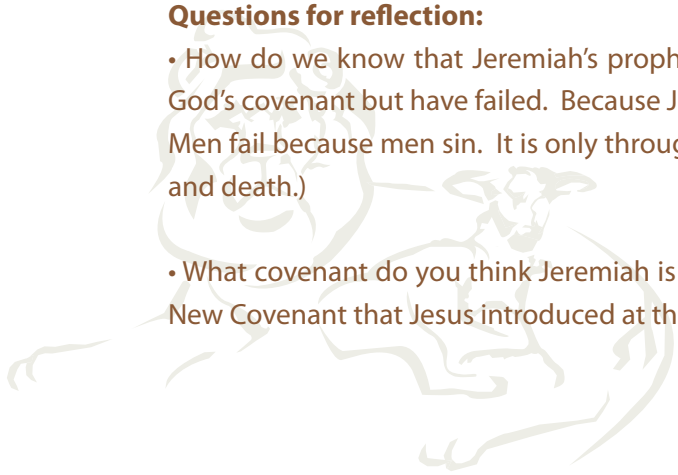
Bible Passage: Jeremiah 32:37-41

Connecting the passage to Christ:

In the midst of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the people of God, Jeremiah brings an encouraging word: God will one day make an "everlasting covenant". This everlasting covenant is a future reference to the covenant of the blood of Jesus, see Luke 22:20. The new covenant introduced by Jesus would be a better covenant, see Hebrews 8:6, because Jesus would be the mediator of this covenant and provide the sacrifice, which has the power to reconcile man and God.

Questions for reflection:

- How do we know that Jeremiah's prophecy refers to Jesus? (Men have tried to uphold the law and God's covenant but have failed. Because Jesus places His Spirit in our hearts, we are able to follow Him. Men fail because men sin. It is only through the faithfulness of Christ that we can have victory over sin and death.)
- What covenant do you think Jeremiah is speaking of in verse 40? (Jeremiah is looking forward to the New Covenant that Jesus introduced at the last supper.)



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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?

READ THE WARNING LABEL

Supplies

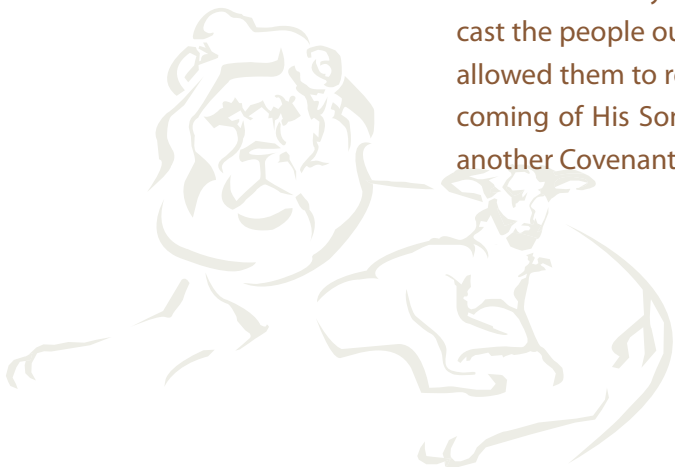
various household items
with warning labels

Show the items to the children and see if they can guess what the warning label says.

Then read 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 and ask the children if they can guess what the warning of the Lord to Israel might have been.

Read Jeremiah 7:1-20 to them. Then ask the class the following questions:

- What did the Lord threaten to do to the people if they did not repent? (Cast them out of His sight [see Jeremiah 7:15] and burn the city [see Jeremiah 7:20]).
- Did the judgment have to come or did God give them another chance? (God gave them another chance [see Jeremiah 7:1-7].)
- Even after they rejected God and He sacked Jerusalem, did God permanently cast the people out of His sight? (No, God brought them back out of captivity and allowed them to rebuild the city and the temple. God was looking forward to the coming of His Son Jesus. There would be another Jerusalem, another King, and another Covenant, all better than the ones that failed.)



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WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

Supplies

large, wide-brimmed
cowboy hat

This skit is just a funny way to talk about how many times Israel was warned. Use two teachers for this skit.

Teacher 1 is a male wearing a large cowboy hat.

Teacher 2 asks Teacher 1 repeatedly to take off the hat.

Teacher 1 insists that he will wear the hat.

Finally, after multiple attempts to warn Teacher 1, Teacher 2 just knocks the hat off.

Teacher 1 objects saying, "Why did you do that?"

Teacher 2 tells him that it is not polite for a man to keep his hat on while praying.

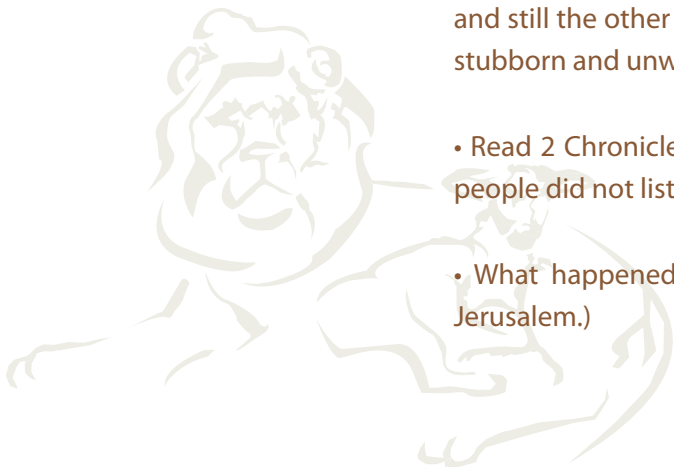
Teacher 1 objects, saying, "But I wasn't praying".

Teacher 2 explains that there were about to pray and that they warned him repeatedly to take off the hat.

Teacher 1 replies that it would have been nice to know Teacher 2 was about to pray.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Did the teacher who wanted to pray give sufficient warning to the teacher with the hat? (Yes, they gave sufficient warning but not sufficient information.)
- What additional information should they have added to make it clearer? (They could have mentioned the reason that they wanted the teacher to remove their hat and that if they did not, they were going to take it off for him.)
- What would you say if the teacher who was going to pray did give the reason why and still the other teacher refused to take off his hat? (I would say the teacher was stubborn and unwilling to listen.)
- Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 to the class. Did the people listen to God? (No, the people did not listen to God.)
- What happened to them as a result? (God used the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem.)



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A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

Supplies

pruning shears, a tree branch (make sure the branch has a lot of smaller branches so that you can cut one off for each of the children.)

Read about the fall of Jerusalem from 2 Chronicles 36 and then read Jeremiah 23:1-7. Explain to the class that even in the midst of the greatest judgment Jerusalem ever saw, God had a plan.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What was God's plan for His people that Jeremiah spoke of? (God planned to send His Son, "a righteous Branch" to save Judah [His people].)
- What is a righteous branch? (A righteous branch of David refers to a descendant of David who would rule in all of God's ways. Show the children how if David is the thick part of the branch all the little ones are connected down to the main branch. That is where we get the idea of a family tree from.)

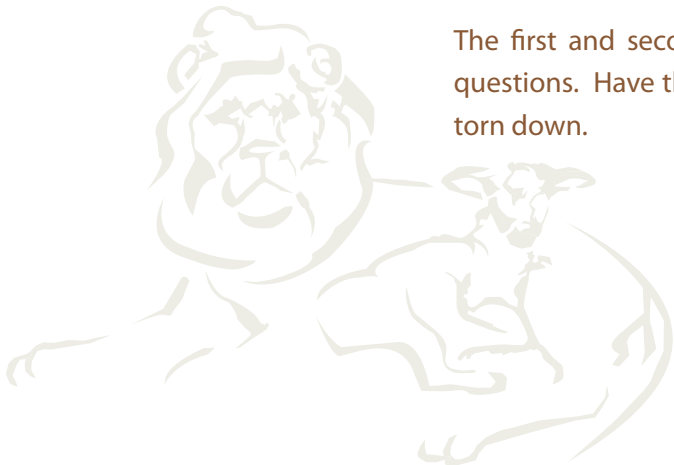
Cut off a tip of a branch for each of the children in the class. Tell them that they should keep the branch as a way to remember that Jesus is the answer to our sin and He alone is our salvation.

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 walls of Jerusalem being torn down.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

pencils, paper, and prizes
for the winners

The object behind a quick review of Jeremiah is to see just how much the Lord poured out grace upon His people.

Divide the class up into teams of four or five. Explain to the class that Jeremiah prophesied during the reign of the last kings of Judah and through the Babylonian captivity. Tell them you want them to go on a hunt for grace and that you want each team to look for examples of God's grace in the book of Jeremiah. The team with the most examples of God's grace will win a prize.

Prior to beginning, set the context by reading 2 Chronicles 36:11-20.

Here are some examples:

Jeremiah 7:3	God warns Judah and is willing to forgive them
Jeremiah 11:1-11	God warns Judah in their rebellion
Jeremiah 15:15	God promises to bring back Israel to their own land after disciplining them
Jeremiah 22:1-5	God warns Judah to obey His word and there will be blessing
Jeremiah 29:10	God limits the captivity to 70 years and promises hope for the people of God
Jeremiah 31:34	God promises a new covenant to His rebellious people
Jeremiah 31:38	God promises the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Nebuchadnezzar – King Nebuchadnezzar was the oldest son of Nabopolassar who founded the Neo-Babylonian dynasty (sometimes referred to as the Chaldean dynasty). He is the king that besieged Jerusalem and carried off its craftsman and other wise and/or prominent men and soldiers. He is the king who had dreams that Daniel interpreted and he is the king who sent Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace. He also is the one who God humbled in His pride and was made to eat grass like an ox.

