

Judah's Captivity

2 Kings 23, 24, 25

The people of Israel and Judah were held captive several times in the Word. The first time was when the Egyptians made them slaves. Then, after escaping, the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Then they entered Israel, the Lord had promised them. The Lord told them again and again that if they followed the Lord and worshiped Him alone, they would prosper and be strong. However, they forgot what it meant to be enslaved. They also forgot that the Lord had saved them, and eventually chose evil over good. First, this led to Israel being split into two nations: Israel and Judah. Then, Israel was captured by Assyria, and Judah was captured by Babylon.

What do you think it means to be in captivity?

The people of Assyria treated the people Israel harshly. But Babylon treated the people of Judah differently depending on their talents and skills. They treated people with special talents and skills better so they could use their talents to benefit Babylon.

How might you feel if you had to share your talents with a country that had taken your freedom away?

People who had been of great importance in Judah and were willing to obey the king of Babylon may have been included in the royal courts. However, those that rebelled would be thrown into prison or executed.

Do you think you would be able to show honor and respect to the king who had taken your country captive? Why or why not?

People who were farmers in Judah became servants and manual laborers in Babylon.

What do you think some of these jobs might have been?

Challenge: Write a letter to a relative who was left in Judah. Tell him or her about your new life in Babylonia. Write from the perspective of any one of the types of captives mentioned—craftsperson, important person, or laborer.