

General Church Education



Israel's Captivity

2 Kings 17; 18:1-12

Lesson 24

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is the Prophet and Preserver

For ages 11-12 years

Israel's Captivity

2 Kings 17; 18:1-12

Teacher Background

The Lord could only help Israel if the people followed Him. When the people did not follow the Lord the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser, besieged Samaria for three years. When Samaria fell, Shalmaneser took the Israelites to live in Assyria and brought people from other nations to live in Samaria. These people did not know the Lord and worshiped other gods. So the Lord sent lions into the land, which frightened them. Therefore, Shalmaneser sent a priest to Bethel to teach the people about the Lord. Judah was spared while this was happening because Hezekiah became king and tore down the high places.

Israel's captivity was the result of centuries of not keeping the covenant with the Lord made at Mount Sinai and renewed repeatedly with other leaders. The promise was simple—if people followed the Lord and obeyed His commandments, they would prosper. But in the end, the opposite happened. Israel was defeated in war and the people were taken captive. These events represent rejecting the Lord spiritually and choosing to live in hell.

Focus Points

- Israel disobeyed the Lord and was taken captive by Assyria on account of their evils.
- Shalmaneser sent other nations to live in Samaria, and the Lord sent lions into the land.
- Judah was spared because Hezekiah became king and destroyed the Baals.

Readings from the Writings

When the children of Israel, who represented the church, departed from their precepts and statutes and fell into the evils which were represented by those nations around them ... they were punished by that nation. For example, when they profaned the holy things of the church by foul idolatries they were punished by the Assyrians and the Chaldeans, because [they] signify the profanation of what is holy. *Divine Providence* 251.3

“The Assyrians’ mean those who from falsities and fallacies reason against the truths and goods of the church from self-intelligence, thus from self-love.” *Apocalypse Explained* 504.16

“[A]ll the nations and peoples who waged war with the sons of Israel represented the hells, which wished to do violence to the church represented by the sons of Israel. Those wars nevertheless actually took place as they are described, still they represented, and thus signified, spiritual wars, since nothing is said in the Word that is not interiorly spiritual.” *Apocalypse Explained* 734.9

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.” (2 Kings 17:13)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Key Points about Israel’s Captivity

Identify key points about a person or event in the story of Israel’s captivity.

The Lost Tribes of Israel

After many years the united kingdom of Israel split into two nations. These nations came to be called Israel and Judah. This situation continued until the Assyrians conquered Israel and took the people who were living there to other areas in Assyria. This group of people eventually lost their distinct identity and culture. They are sometimes called “the lost tribes of Israel.” Fill in a web to show what might have happened to a family that was deported to Assyria.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Sequence a Brief History of Ancient Israel

Read a brief list of events that happened in ancient Israel and arrange them in chronological order. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-sequence-a-brief-history-of-ancient-israel-from-exodus-to-2-kings.pdf>

Who Was King Ahaz?

Read 2 Kings 16 and answer questions about King Ahaz as you finish reading each section. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-who-was-king-ahaz-2-kings-16.pdf>

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. As you fill in the spaces, think about whether the king is good or evil. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

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Vocabulary

treasury—funds, or a place where treasure is kept

conspiracy—a secret plan to do something unlawful

tribute—regular payments one ruler makes to another ruler

Ahaz in Judah

Ahaz was reigning when Syria besieged Judah. Ahaz asked the king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser, for help. He sent him gold and silver from the temple and from his own treasury. The king of Assyria then went up against Syria and took its capital city, Damascus, and killed the king.

Ahaz went to meet Tiglath-Pileser in Damascus. He became inspired by an altar he saw in a temple there and then made many changes in the temple in Jerusalem, including recreating the altar he had seen. He showed total disregard for the directions that had been given to Solomon about building of the temple and he continued in his evil ways.

Hoshea, King of Israel

Pekah ruled in Israel for twenty years. During that time, Assyria, under the leadership of Tiglath-Pileser, conquered parts of Israel including all of the land of Naphtali. The people of those lands were made captives of Assyria.

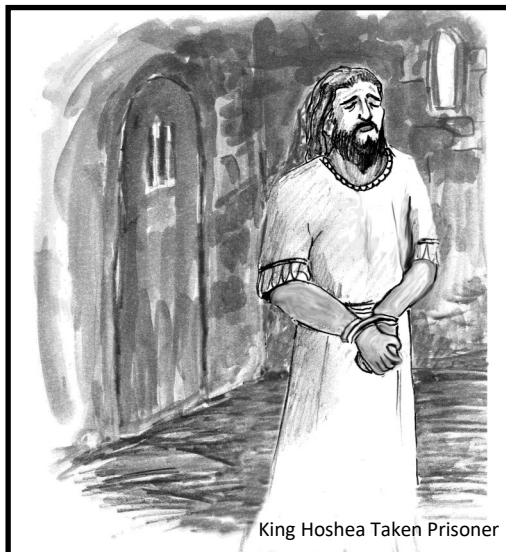
In a conspiracy led by Hoshea, and probably backed by Tiglath-Pileser, Pekah was killed and Hoshea became king in Israel. Some time into Hoshea's reign, Tiglath-Pileser died and his son, Shalmaneser, became king of Assyria. He campaigned against Israel and made it a vassal of

Assyria. This meant that to keep Assyria from actually taking his kingship away from him, Hosea paid tribute to the Assyrian king.

After three years, Hoshea grew tired of paying tribute and being under the control of another nation, so he began to plot against Assyria. Hoshea even sent a message to the king of Egypt asking him to join him in a rebellion. However, Shalmaneser found out about these activities and took Hoshea prisoner, ending the conspiracy. Hoshea had been king for nine years.

Israel Is Taken Captive

Following the capture of Hoshea, Shalmaneser led his armies throughout Israel capturing people and taking



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them into Assyria. He besieged Samaria for three years. It is hard to know if it was the city or the region of Samaria that took so long to overcome. Most cities in the area were fortified and built on hills. The capital city of Samaria was well protected. It was surrounded on three sides by valleys and rocky slopes. With hills behind it and a clear view before it, Samaria was defensible. Omri, its founder, and Ahab, his son, fortified it well. It was probably under guard and its citizens would not have wanted to be captured. The will to resist Shalmaneser must have been strong. However, Samaria could not continue their resistance forever. When it fell, the people were taken away to Assyria along with the rest of the Israelites.

The Evils of Israel

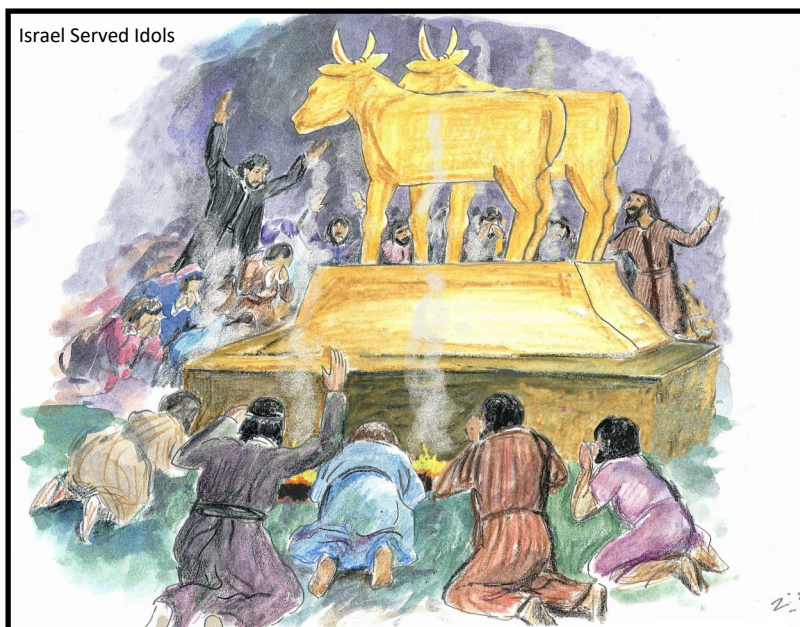
Imagine what Israel might have become if the kings and the people had followed the Lord. Their final captivity was the result of continual disobedience and wicked actions. Not only did they shun the Lord as their God, they adopted the gods of other nations along and their way of life. They served idols, even though the Lord had said, “You shall not do this thing” (2 Kings 17:12).

In spite of the warnings of the prophets, the people ignored the covenants that the Lord had made throughout their history with leaders like Abraham, Moses and Samuel. They were repeatedly told that the Lord could help them only if they looked to Him alone. So, when it was clear that the Israelites would never be brought back to the worship of the Lord, He fulfilled the prophecy given earlier.

“And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and made Israel sin.” (2 Kings 14:16)

New Inhabitants for Samaria

Rather than leave the Samarian cities empty or have Assyrians inhabit them, Shalmaneser



brought people from other nations he had conquered to live there. These people had no knowledge of the Lord and lived according to their own ways. So the Lord sent lions into the land and the people became frightened. Shalmaneser then sent a priest of the Israelites back to live in Bethel to teach the people about the Israelitish God. In those days, people believed that there were particular gods for each region. It was thought that Jehovah, being the god of Israel, could help any

people living in the area. The people came to fear the Lord, but they did not change their allegiance to their own gods. They even used the high places in Israel to sacrifice to the gods of their nations.

Judah Is Spared—Hezekiah Is King

During Hoshea's reign in Israel, Ahaz died and his son Hezekiah became the king of Judah. Hezekiah was a good king who tore down the high places and re-established the worship of the Lord.

“He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any who were before him.” (2 Kings 18:5)

Hezekiah prospered against the Assyrians and the Philistines because he trusted in the Lord and was dedicated to His commandments.

Who Were the Assyrians?

Assyria was a nation to the north and east of Israel in what is now Iraq. It traded with many nations while raiding and suppressing others, including Syria and Babylon. The Assyrian army was huge. Its soldiers were cruel, ferocious and feared. The kings demanded tribute from the nations Assyria controlled, and made the people slaves and workmen, using their talents.

Spiritually, Assyria means that a person can see what is good and true in something and also what is evil and false. This allows a person to make truly wise decisions. It has this meaning because of the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers which flow through it.

However, since Assyria was warlike and worshipped false gods, it stood for a kind of thinking which was perverted and used for evil purposes. Having anything to do with the Assyrians was a sin that prophets like Isaiah and Hosea warned could bring about the downfall of Israel.

There are “Assyrians” in our lives. They are people who try to use reasoning to convince us that something evil is good or that something false is true are like the Assyrians who raided and attacked Israel. We should resist such reasoning and instead listen to other people who can help us to see the difference between what is good and true, evil and false, and to choose as the Lord wishes us to choose.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

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Projects and Activities (answers at back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

Key Points about Israel's Captivity

Identify key points about a person or event in the story of Israel's captivity.

The Lost Tribes of Israel

After many years the united kingdom of Israel split into two nations. These nations came to be called Israel and Judah. This situation continued until the Assyrians conquered Israel and took the people who were living there to other areas in Assyria. This group of people eventually lost their distinct identity and culture. They are sometimes called “the lost tribes of Israel.” Fill in a web to show what might have happened to a family that was deported to Assyria.

Key Points about Israel's Captivity

2 Kings 17; 18:1-12

Identify key points about a person or event in the story of Israel's captivity.

1. List three ideas about King Hoshea that describe who he was and what kind of person he was.

2. List five things the Israelites did that led to their captivity by the Assyrians.

3. Name three things the king of Assyria did to make sure the Israelites could not regain power in Israel.

4. List three things Hezekiah did that illustrate what kind of king he was.

The Lost Tribes of Israel

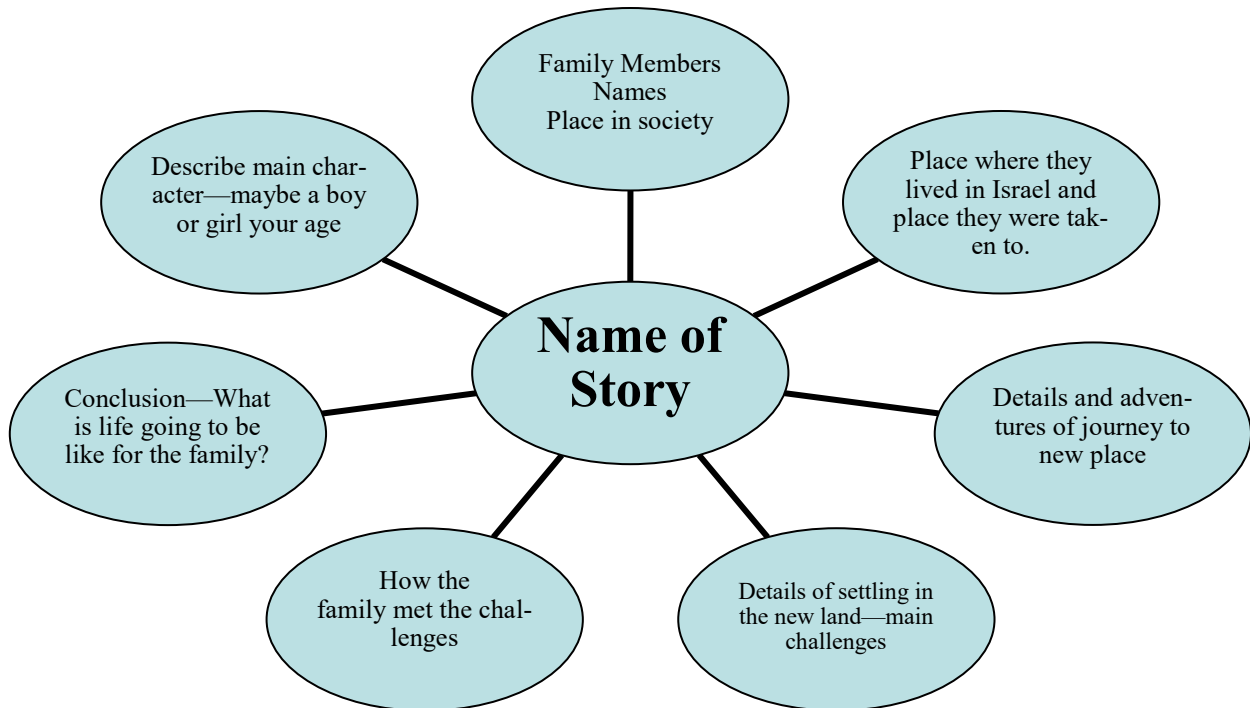
2 Kings 17; 18:1-12

The kingdom of Israel split into two nations around the year 926 B.C. After Solomon’s son Rehoboam ascended to the throne, the ten northern tribes rebelled and withdrew from the union. This left two tribes—Judah and Benjamin, plus much of Levi—under the control of the king in Jerusalem and birthed two separate nations. The ten northern tribes came to be called the nation of Israel, and later Samaria. The two southern tribes were called the nation of Judah.

This situation continued until around 723 B.C., when the Assyrians conquered Israel. To keep conquered nations weak and under their control, Assyria typically moved their captives to other areas and resettled the land with newcomers. When the Israel was conquered all but the very poor were deported and moved to other areas in the Assyrian kingdom. This included places near Nineveh, Haran, and on what is now the Iran-Iraq border. In their place, settlers were moved in from places like Babylon and Syria.

These settlers married the people from Israel who remained and became the Samaritans. They were named after the area of Samaria. Some of these people survive today. The Israelites who were deported also intermarried with the peoples of the places where they were resettled. They eventually lost their culture and identity. They are sometimes called “the lost tribes of Israel.”

There are many stories and legends about what happened to these tribes and where they settled. Think of a story you could tell about one family who was deported to somewhere in Assyria. Then make and complete a web like the one below.



Key Points about Israel's Captivity

1. List three ideas about King Hoshea that describe who he was and what kind of person he was. Hoshea was evil; he became a vassal of Assyria; he conspired with Egypt against Assyria.
2. List five things the Israelites did that led to their captivity by the Assyrians.
Israel worshiped other gods; secretly built high places; set up wooden images and sacred pillars; burned incense on high places; rejected the Lord; ignored the commandments; made two golden calves.
3. Name three things the king of Assyria did to make sure the Israelites could not regain power in Israel.
Assyria took Israel to Assyria; Assyria settled other nations in Israel; Assyria sent the priests from Assyria back to Israel.
4. List three things Hezekiah did that illustrate what kind of king he was.
Hezekiah did what was right; he removed the high places and images; he kept the commandments; he did not serve Assyria.