

General Church Education



# Judah's Captivity

2 Kings 23:29-37; 24:1-20; 25:1-11

## Lesson 28

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

## Judah's Captivity

2 Kings 23:29-37; 24:1-20; 25:1-11

### Teacher Background

Towards the end of the kingdom of Judah Egypt dominated its affairs. Pharaoh Necho took king Jehoahaz prisoner, put his brother Eliakim (Jehoiakim) on the throne, and taxed Judah. Then Babylon made Judah its vassal. Eliakim rebelled, but Judah could not defend itself and Babylon took over. Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem. He took the king, the skilled workers, and Judah's treasures to Babylon, and appointed Zedekiah king. After that, he burned the temple and the palace and took everything of value. Then he appointed Gedeliah to govern. However, the people killed him, after which the remaining people fled to Egypt.

Babylon brought about the end of the Israelitish church. By then, Judah was evil and full of falsities. Yet people were still given the opportunity to remain loyal to the Lord. During the 600 years between the Babylonian captivity and the Lord's birth on earth the Jewish church took on new forms. Rabbis or teachers reintroduced sacred rites and taught the Word. Defining the Jewish religion helped to preserve the Word.

### Focus Points

- As Josiah's sons took the throne, Babylon took over Judah.
- As Babylon took Judah into captivity, people rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.
- As the Church neared its end, Jerusalem was destroyed.

### Readings from the Writings

“When the sons of Israel wholly departed from the statutes which were representative of the spiritual things of the church ... they were all given into the hands of the king of Assyria.... The same thing happened to the Jews. When they had adulterated and profaned all the statutes, judgments, and laws that represented good and truth of faith ... their church thus became Babylon, then not only their kings and princes and the whole people, but also all the treasures of the house of Jehovah ... were given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and moreover the temple itself was burned ... they filled Jerusalem with innocent blood ... they offered incense unto Baal, poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, set abominations in the house of Jehovah, built high places to Baal in the valley of Hinnom, delivered up their sons and daughters to Molech. All these signify the profanation of the holy things of the church. Such profanation is signified also by ‘Babylon.’ That the land, therefore ... might no longer be profaned by them, and also that Babylon might thus fully put on its representation, it was said to them by Jeremiah that they should surrender themselves voluntarily to the king of Babylon, and those who did not surrender ... but remained in the land, should die by the sword, famine, and pestilence.” *Apocalypse Explained* 1029.16

## Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“For because of the anger of the Lord this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence.” (2 Kings 24:20)

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

Judah's Captivity Questions

Write a sentence to answer each question.

Preservation and Preparation

Whenever a church came to an end, the Lord raised up a new church. Before the church ended, He would provide for the preservation of its truths and prepare the world to accept the new church that was to come. Explore what happened in this story that would provide for the Old Testament to be preserved.

### Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Judah's Captivity

Reflect on what happened to the people of Judah who were taken into captivity in Babylon. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-judahs-captivity-2-kings-23-24-25.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>

# Judah's Captivity

2 Kings 23:29-37; 24:1-20; 25:1-11

## Vocabulary

**vassal**—a country controlled by another country

**besiege**—surround with armed forces to capture a city

**allegiance**—loyalty to a group or cause

### The Sons of Josiah Become Kings of Judah

King Josiah loved the Lord, but his commitment did not influence his sons or change the hearts and minds of the people of Judah. After Josiah died, his son Jehoahaz became king. He was like the earlier evil kings and the people soon returned to their selfish and ungodly ways.

With Josiah's death the Egyptians gained power over Judah. Three months after Jehoahaz took the throne, Pharaoh Necho took him prisoner and imposed a heavy tax. Then he named Jehoahaz's brother, Eliakim, king of Judah. Necho changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim, then took Jehoahaz back to Egypt where he died.

In spite of what might seem a friendly relationship between the Pharaoh and Jehoiakim, the tax still had to be paid. To raise the silver and gold needed, Jehoiakim collected it from the people. Like his brother, he chose to do evil.

### Babylon Takes over Judah

While Jehoiakim was king, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made Judah its vassal. Jehoiakim rebelled against the Babylonians. However, because Judah had returned to idolatry and other sins, the Lord sent enemies against it. People from Chaldea, Syria, Moab and Ammon raided Judah, destroying its ability to defend itself. Therefore, the Babylonians took all the land from the boundaries of Egypt to the Euphrates river.

### Babylonia Takes Judah into Captivity

After eleven years, Jehoiakim died and his son, Jehoiachin became king. His reign was very short. Within three months Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. He took the king, his family and his household captive. The Babylonian king also took all of the treasures from the palace and the temple, including golden items made during Solomon's time that were still in the temple. Then Nebuchadnezzar took the people of Jerusalem and of Judah into captivity. He took everyone who was skilled and strong to Babylon along with King Jehoiachin and his household.

In doing this, Judah became dependent on Babylonia for everything. At the same time, Nebuchadnezzar strengthened his country by bringing in people to build and protect his cities.

### Judah Rebels Against Nebuchadnezzar

After taking Jehoiachin to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar made his uncle, whom he renamed Zedekiah, the ruler in Judah. Like his brothers and his nephew, Zedekiah was an evil leader. He did nothing to bring Judah back to the Lord. He had little power in Judah due to the Babylonian presence and because the officers of the court and most of his army had been taken to Babylon.

According to the prophet Jeremiah, Zedekiah was torn between doing what he suggested—serving Babylon—and what his advisors wanted—rebellion. He does not appear to have been a strong leader, but he chose to rebel against Babylon. In response, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem until the people were so weakened by famine that they could no longer defend it.

Babylon broke through the walls of Jerusalem so the king and the men fled. The Babylonian army, which was camped around Jerusalem, scattered Zedekiah's army and then took him captive. The soldiers took Zedekiah to their king and he was judged for his rebellion. He was made to watch the death of his sons, and was then blinded.

### The Final Destruction of Jerusalem

After Zedekiah was captured, Nebuzaradan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, went to Jerusalem. He burned down the temple, the king's palace and the houses of other leaders in Jerusalem. He carried away most people who were left behind during Jehoiachin's captivity, and left only those who could farm the land.

Nebuzaradan took everything of value that was still in the temple to Babylon. Among these things were the huge bronze pillars and the bronze sea which he broke down so they could be carried away. He took the priests and servants who remained in the temple captive, along with a leader of the Judean army and other followers of Zedekiah who were hiding in Jerusalem. Then he brought them to Nebuchadnezzar who killed them for their allegiance to Zedekiah.

“Thus Judah was carried away from its own land.” (2 Kings 25:21)

After this final captivity, Nebuchadnezzar set up Gedeliah as governor over Judah. When some

of the people who were left went to him, perhaps to question Babylonian control of the land, Gedeliah told them to serve the king of Babylon and all would be well with them. At least one of them, Ishmael, didn't like this advice so he took ten men with him

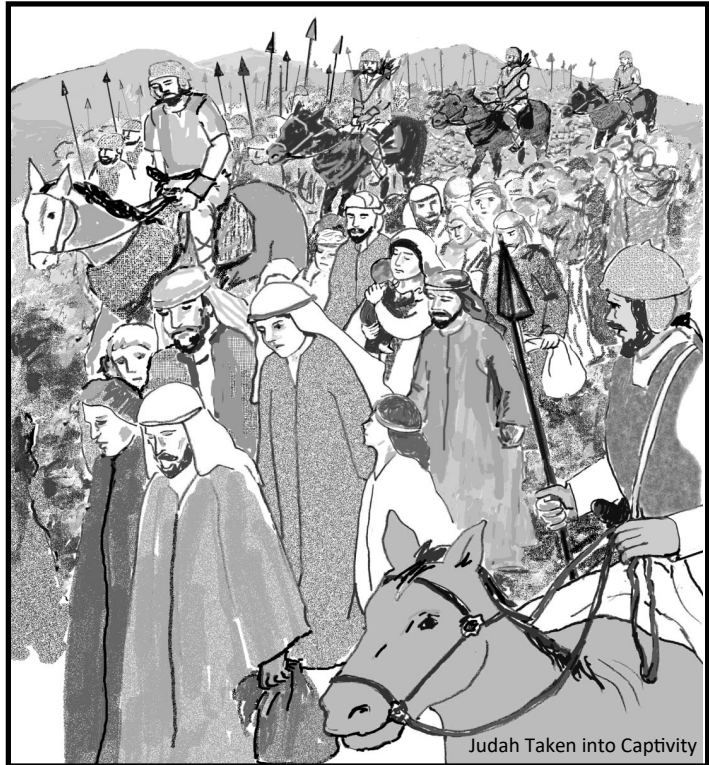


The Destruction of Jerusalem

and killed Gedeliah. Then people who remained in Judah and feared the Babylonians fled to Egypt.

### The End of a Church Is Near

With the call of Abraham in the Book of Genesis, the Lord prepared for a church to be established on earth. You might remember that the Lord made a special covenant with Abraham, telling him that his descendants would inhabit the Land of Canaan, the land which became known as Israel. The Israelitish church, named after Abraham's grandson, Israel (Jacob), was fully established when the Lord gave the Ten Commandments. Through the years the Lord renewed His covenant with the leaders of Israel, telling them that He could give them prosperity and happiness if they obeyed the Ten Commandments.



Judah Taken into Captivity

This lesson tells us of the people's rejection of that church. Despite all of the Lord's promises and warnings, the people could still not choose His way over their own selfish desires. You can imagine how terribly sad the Lord must have felt when the captivities of Israel and Judah had to take place. He feels this sadness anytime a person chooses hell over heaven.

The Lord works to establish a church in each one of us. Every time we learn from the Word we have the opportunity to make those ideas part of our lives, or to reject them. The Lord does not force us, as He did not actually force the Israelites. He did provide good and bad consequences to help them make good choices, but this was not enough to turn them away from evil.

We too, suffer good and bad consequences depending on our choices, although they are not always as obvious as those of the Israelites. Ultimately, our choices will determine our eternal home in either heaven or hell. While people are growing up, the adults their lives impose consequences for disobedient and unsafe behavior. Children and adolescents can not yet choose heaven or hell, but they can begin to make decisions that lay foundations for good choices that will later lead them to heaven. The Israelites could have chosen to remain faithful to the Lord and remain in the land promised to Abraham—a beautiful, fruitful land that represented heaven.

## Activity Overview

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“For because of the anger of the Lord this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence.” (2 Kings 24:20)

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

Choose one or two.

#### Judah's Captivity Questions

Write a sentence to answer each question.

#### Preservation and Preparation

Whenever a church came to an end, the Lord raised up a new church. Before the church ended, He provided for the preservation of its truths and prepared the world to accept the new church that was to come. Explore what happened in this story that would provide for the Old Testament to be preserved.

## Judah's Captivity Questions

2 Kings 23:29-37; 24:1-20; 25:1-11

Write a sentence to answer each question.

1. Who was Nebuchadnezzar?
2. What relationship did Judah have with Babylon during Jehoiakim's reign in Judah?
3. Why did Jehoiakim's rebellion against Babylon fail?
4. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to Jehoiachin and to Jerusalem after Jehoiakim died?
5. Who made Zedekiah king of Judah? What power did he actually have in Judah?
6. Why and how did Nebuchadnezzar punish Zedekiah?
7. What did Nebuchadnezzar's captain do to destroy Jerusalem?
8. Why did the captain of the guard leave some of the poor Jewish people behind?
9. What happened to the ritual objects in the temple?
10. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to the leaders of the Jewish people?
11. Of whom was Gedaliah governor?
12. What happened to Gedaliah? Why?
13. What did the Jewish leaders do? Why?



## Preservation and Preparation

2 Kings 23:29-37; 24:1-20; 25:1-11

Whenever a church came to an end, the Lord raised up a new church. Before the old church ended, He preserved its truths and prepared the world to accept the church that was to come.

When Israel was captive in Assyria, the people mixed with the Assyrian culture and their religion was lost. This did not happen with Judah in Babylonia. The stories of the Prophets tell us how the culture and religion of Judah were preserved in Babylonia and to some degree in Judah as well. This allowed the Old Testament to be preserved.

1. What happened in this story that would provide for the Old Testament to be preserved?

During the Babylonian captivity, the prophet Jeremiah sent a letter to the people who were carried away to Babylon. Find this letter in Jeremiah 29:4-14. Read it, and then answer the questions below.

2. What did the Lord tell the captive Jews to do?

3. What would happen if they did as the Lord commanded?

4. How might the Jews' obedience to the Lord help preserve His Word?

5. How might the Jews' obedience to the Lord prepare the way for a new church?

Seventy years after capturing Judah, Babylonia was invaded by the Persians. The Persians let the Jews return to Judah, to worship their God. They even helped them to rebuild the temple.

6. How might this have helped preserve the Old Testament?

7. How might this have helped prepare the people for a new church?

8. What do you think the new church will be called? Why?

# Answers

## Lesson 28

### Judah's Captivity Questions

1. King of Babylon.
2. Judah was Babylon's vassal.
3. Jehoiakim's rebellion against Babylon failed because Judah worshipped idols.
4. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin and all of Jerusalem into captivity in Babylon.
5. Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king of Judah, but he had little power in Judah.
6. Nebuchadnezzar punished Zedekiah for rebelling and made him watch his sons being killed before being blinded.
7. Nebuchadnezzar's captain burned the temple, and the houses of the leaders and took most people captive.
8. The captain of the guard left poor people behind to farm the land.
9. The ritual objects in the temple were taken to Babylon.
10. Nebuchadnezzar killed the leaders of the Jewish people.
11. Of whom was Gedaliah governor?
12. Ten men killed Gedaliah for telling the people to serve the king of Babylon.
13. The Jewish leaders fled to Egypt because they feared the Babylonians.

### Preservation and Preparation

1. The Word was found in the temple in Jerusalem.
2. The Lord told the people settle the land and have children.
3. After seventy years they would be gathered together and return to the land..
4. The Jews' obedience to the Lord would mean they would read the Word.
5. The Jews' would bring people into order so they could recognize the Lord.
6. People would have read the prophecies of the Lord's coming.
7. People would be expecting and looking for the Lord.
8. The Christian Church, the church that started when the Lord was born on earth.