

LESSON 71

The Fall of Jerusalem

2 KINGS 23:28–37; 2 CHRONICLES 36:1–23



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD'S JUDGMENT COMES WHEN HIS PEOPLE DO NOT REPENT

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** 5 MIN
Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** 10 MIN
Read 2 Chronicles 36 from the Scriptures or read story 71, "The Fall of Jerusalem," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** 10 MIN
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)
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** 10 MIN
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** 10 MIN
Why Did You Do That?
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ cowboy hat, large and wide-brimmed
6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** 5 MIN
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** 10 MIN
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ coloring page 71—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** 5 MIN
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** 10 MIN
Besiege the City
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ pitcher of water and cups
 - ✓ large bag of pretzels
 - ✓ napkins (one for each student)

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Judah's last kings are wicked—This week, we will look at the final tragic decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah. After Josiah dies, two of his sons, one grandson, and another relative follow him as kings of Judah. Each of these is wicked and does not worship God. The end result is that God, after many years of patience and mercy, finally brings foreign armies to attack and humble the kingdom of Judah.

God sends messengers but the kings don't listen—God sends many prophets to the kingdom of Judah warning them to repent of their wickedness. But the people and their kings keep slipping back into paganism, never following God for long. They often mock the prophets, despising their words. God uses 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 says, “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 11:6–7). But neither the kings nor the people of Judah repent of their sin. As a result, Jeremiah's prophecy comes true, and the people of Judah get taken into captivity for seventy years.

Jerusalem falls in judgment—Not long after Jehoiachin became king, Nebuchadnezzar surrounds Jerusalem, takes the king prisoner, and carries off the rest of the treasures in the temple (2 Kings 24:10–13). Nebuchadnezzar arrests the mighty men and the craftsmen of Jerusalem—Daniel among them—and takes them as captives into Babylon. Zedekiah is made king, but even after all this, he does not listen to Jeremiah. Zedekiah does what is evil in God's sight and even rebels against Nebuchadnezzar. Because of this, Nebuchadnezzar kills many in Jerusalem, burns the temple, sets the city on fire, and breaks down Jerusalem's walls. Those who survive are carried into exile to Babylon.

These were terrible times. God brought such destruction to Jerusalem because his people had ignored his warnings through the prophets for hundreds of years. But there is a glimpse of hope. After the people of Judah are in captivity for many years, the kingdom of Babylon is conquered by Persia. Through Cyrus, king of Persia, God has mercy on Judah. Cyrus declares that the people of God can return home.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Jeremiah 23:5–6.

God sent his prophet Jeremiah to warn the kings of Judah. The kings did not listen to Jeremiah, and in the end, there was no remedy—God allowed Jerusalem to be ransacked and the people carried into captivity (2 Chronicles 36:16).

God, however, was not finished speaking through Jeremiah. Jeremiah said that God would give his people another king from the line of David. This king would be a "righteous Branch" and he would be called "The Lord is our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5–6). Jesus is that King!

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 2 Chronicles 36 from the Scriptures or read story 71, "The Fall of Jerusalem," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

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)

Follow the reading of the Bible story by reading 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.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Why Did You Do That?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ cowboy hat, large and wide brimmed

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

Teacher 1 wears 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 they 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?
(sufficient warning, yes, but not sufficient information)
- What additional information should she have added to make it clearer?
(She could have mentioned the reason that she wanted the teacher to remove his hat and that if he did not, she was 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.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

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.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 71—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Why is the city burning?
(The Babylonians attacked the city, wrecked it, and burned it.)
- Did God warn his people to stop their idol worship?
(Yes, but they didn't listen.)

■ **Would the temple ever be rebuilt?**

(Yes, after seventy years the temple would be rebuilt and the walls of Jerusalem restored.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Besiege the City

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pitcher of water and cups
- ✓ large bag of pretzels
- ✓ napkins (one for each student)

This object lesson is meant to teach the children what it is like when an enemy besieges a city.

Have the children stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle, facing inward. Tell them that they represent a city with high walls like Jerusalem. On a chair in the center of the circle, place one cup of water, the stack of cups, one napkin with one pretzel, and the stack of napkins. Tell the children that this represents the food and water in your city. Place the pitcher of water and the bag of pretzels somewhere on the other side of the room.

Explain that you are an enemy king. Say, "If I want to conquer your city, I could attack your high walls but I would probably lose. Instead, all I have to do is besiege your city. That means surround it and not allow anyone to go in or come out. This would create a problem for the city once you run out of food."

Pass around the cups and distribute a little water and a bit of pretzel to everyone.

Have the children choose someone to try and get more food. Each time a child leaves the circle, capture them.

Say, "This is what Nebuchadnezzar did to Jerusalem. First with King Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:10)—he gave up quickly. Then it happened again with King Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1). He didn't want to give up, so Nebuchadnezzar built siegeworks around Jerusalem." Slide a table over to the children and then a chair up to the table. Step up from the chair, onto the table and

say, “To build siegeworks, pile up dirt high enough to climb over the city wall.” Read 2 Kings 25:1–7 to the children to see what happened.

Finally, explain that God was kind to Israel. Nebuchadnezzar could simply have killed all of God’s people, but by taking the best of the men to Babylon, God used Nebuchadnezzar to protect his people. Since, after 70 years, he would allow them to return.

LESSON 71 - THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

